

A SERIAL STORY OF VIGOROUS AND PATHETIC INTEREST BEGINS TO-DAY.

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HONORA TRIED TO SHIELD HER SHAME-STRICKEN FACE.

OUT OF THE GLOOM

NOVELETTE

(Complete in this No.)

CHAPTER I.

WHEN I married you, madam, you had not a cent to call your own!

"And that was the reason I married you," answered Lady Honora, with perfect coolness, which only aggravated Mr. Simon Haredale the more.

"Upon my word, you are calm," he said, rather loudly. "You might at least have the decency to keep that reason to yourself."

"In other words, to 'assume a virtue if I have it not.' Mr. Haredale, you should know

by experience that candour is part and parcel of my nature."

"As is extravagance," he retorted, angrily.

"You spend my money like water."

The bright, dark grey eyes smile into the gloomy ones above.

"What is money for if not to spend? And there never was yet a Ballyhoran who did not know how to do that. The worst of it was we so rarely had the chance of exercising our talent."

"You have exercised yours well since you became my wife; and I tell you, there must be some limit to your extravagance, or you will ruin me. Look at this bill of Manton's, for instance," and the irate husband thrust it before her eyes.

"It is rather excessive," her ladyship said, calmly; "but you must recollect, Mr. Haredale, I did not fix the prices. Remonstrate with Manton, not with me!"

"You already have more gowns than you can wear. Why on earth did you order others? When you were plain Honora MacDennis of Ballyhoran you had not a decent frock to your back!"

"I never was plain," saucily; "and although what you say is quite true, I cannot compliment you on the good taste of your remark. I was as poor as poor could be—horribly, shamefully poor—and you knew it. There is no occasion to twit me with my poverty."

"I did not intend to do so, but you force me to speak plainly. I am sure the allowance I make you should be sufficient for any woman who was not criminally extravagant. The lady's eyes flashed with sudden passion.

"Why should I consider your purse?" she

asked, quickly. "Ought I not to enjoy the price of my freedom? If you had only loved me—just a little—for myself, you would not have found me ungrateful or unreasonable. But you cared no more for me than for any other woman. Only you were rich; you wanted a wife to do you credit—a young wife, nobly born, who would assist you to enter the charmed circle which would not open to you alone for your gold. And your choice fell upon me—me, a poor, wild Irish girl, scarcely seventeen—without the courage to resist her father's will!"

"Well, we were married—it was only three years ago, but it seems like three centuries to me—and I ask you from the time we first met, did you ever give me one fond word? I know love between us is impossible. Young hearts will turn, to young hearts—and you confess to fifty; but there might have been affection on one side, gratitude and duty on the other. As it is, you have destroyed all chances of such a blessed prospect. The fault is yours. I will not take the blame," and she ended as suddenly as she began, only her eyes were dangerously bright, and the colour in her cheeks was considerably heightened, whilst her bosom rose and fell with her emotion.

"I was not aware," sneered the gentleman, "that you went in for sentiment; and in a purely business transaction like our alliance you could hardly expect it to have a part. You are my wife, and are answerable to me for your actions, are subject to my control. And to save all further dispute let me make it clear to you that I will not increase your allowance by one farthing, or pay any debt you may contract which is beyond your power to cancel. Do you hear me?"

"You speak with admirable distinctness, sir," Lady Honora answered, with a return of her old sang froid, "and fortunately I am not deaf."

"Then please to remember what I have said."

"I shall do my utmost to forget. I hate anything unpleasant."

But Mr. Haredale left the room too soon to hear the reply, which, if the truth must be confessed, was characteristic of his wife; and the lady sighed relievedly.

She sat resting her chin in her hollowed palm, a thoughtful look upon her lovely, piquante face, a shadow of sadness in her dark, beautiful eyes.

She was only twenty, a mere girl yet, and she had been a wife three years. A frown contracted her level brows as she thought—

"They did not leave me any youth. I was a wife before most girls are out of the school-room. And they think they have done great things for me in accomplishing my marriage. They believe I like this idle, foolish, artificial life. Oh! a thousand times rather would I be running wild about the dear, shabby old place, coarsely fed and badly clothed, than lie as I do in the bed of luxury! If only Mr. Haredale would let me have one of the girls here it would be better—better for me. I grow so hard and wicked, being starved of love. No doubt many envy me. If they only knew the truth! if they only knew the truth!"

Her thoughts strayed fondly to the old ruined castle, with its crumbling walls and broken casements; its wild, neglected grounds beyond which rose the green hills, from which one caught a flash of the unquiet sea, lashing the distant islands, which looked so vague and formless through the soft, hazy air.

Many and many a time the young Ballyhoran tribe had wandered at will over the hills, down to the shore, heedless of the distance; just to watch the vessels as they passed, and speculate on their destination. At such times they would take whatever provisions came first, for they had good healthy appetites; and these impromptu picnics were always enjoyable, even though the party returned at night tired, dirty, and draggled.

They were happy young people, even though

they had lost their mother; and their father, the poverty-stricken Earl of Ballyhoran, was but an indifferent parent, a riotous, drunken, half-educated man, beside whom Mr. Haredale showed to greatest advantage. How the Earl and the retired Manchester man chanced to meet Honora never knew; but one day her father bade her make herself presentable, as he should bring a friend home to dinner.

Poor Honora! she had not a gown fit to be seen, but she laughed over this misfortune, being a healthy, happy girl, and met her father's guest without fear or misgiving, not even caring that he regarded her so intently.

"He was such an old man!" she said afterwards to her sister Eily; "one did not care how he looked, or what he said and did."

Simon Haredale approved the ripe, young beauty. Being fair himself he naturally preferred a dark woman; and Honora, with her dark, grey eyes, her clear skin, and black hair was extremely lovely, even in her worn frock.

He was an ambitious man, and panted to be a leader in the society which would have none of him. He had made a colossal fortune, and intended to enjoy it after his own fashion. But first he must have a wife, young and high-born, at whose "Sesame" society should fling wide its gate; and she, being young, he might naturally hope for an heir to perpetuate his name and glory. It was one of Simon Haredale's greatest grievances that Honora had borne him no child.

Well, seeing and approving her, he at once opened his plans to the Earl, who agreed cordially with them, and Honora—being summoned was bidden to prepare for marriage. She stood too much in awe of her father to remonstrate, and she was too young to know anything of love or lovers. She only thought in her innocent heart that as Lady Haredale she could do so much for her tribe of brothers and sisters, all of whom were so dear to her; and so she went unreluctantly to the altar, not realising the gravity of the step she was taking, or what misery she might be laying up for herself. She neither liked nor esteemed her husband. Was it possible she should, when he had simply purchased her!—for not one word of love, one thought of love, had entered his matrimonial intentions.

Mr. Haredale took his youthful bride to England; she cried throughout the journey, and he made no effort to comfort her! He was an essentially cold-hearted man, and Honora's grief at parting with her people was beyond his comprehension. She was going from poverty to wealth—what reason had she for tears?

At first the poor young bride strove to break down her bridegroom's reserve, to minister to his wants; but he repulsed her attentions, and told her idly not to take a servant's offices upon herself. She never made a second attempt; but rapidly she changed, with all the quickness of her Irish nature, adapting herself to her altered circumstances, so that, despite her extreme youth, she was soon an authority in her own particular set, which was of the most exclusive nature.

Simon Haredale was proud of her victories, of the position he (through her) had achieved, and that was all. He could hate well, but of the divine power of love he had no least conception; he liked to see Honora bravely dressed, and surrounded by England's greatest men. He was not jealous that they vied with each other for her favour; he could trust her. Bright and piquante as she was, she was not a coquette, and love was not for her. She never thought of it; he knew this, and had no fear that she would sully his name, of which, indeed, he was justly proud.

He had come of humble stock—humble, honest, hardworking, people, who did their duty to their neighbour, and served God sincerely according to their light. His own father had started as a factory hand, and through his industry finally became a mill-

owner; and on the small foundation laid Simon had built up his great fortune. Certainly in manners and appearance the commoner was the Earl of Ballyhoran's superior, and so much his wife admitted.

"It is such awful nonsense," she said one day to a friend, "to represent the English merchant as ignorant, and careless of the use of the aspirate! No one but a fool would do it! Why, my own father—son of a hundred eels—cannot compare, intellectually or socially, with Mr. Haredale. I am not a prejudiced party," she concluded, with a roguish glance; it was quite an open secret that Lady Honora's marriage had been quite *a la mode*.

So she went her way, and he his; conversation between them being rare, save on occasions like the present, when he remonstrated with her on her extravagance, and she openly laughed at him, having grown accustomed to such scenes, and being not a little hardened by the life she led. She was the reigning beauty, certainly—none could deny her charms; and only one man, a great poet, had ever found anything lacking in her loveliness.

"She is very lovely," he said, "but she is not perfect!" and his listener, quite agast at such heresy, asked:—

"Of what do you complain? She is simply divine!"

"She never will be perfect until she has learned one lesson—the lesson of love. Then, indeed, she would be unsurpassable!"

"But she is a married woman! It is to be hoped she will not learn the lesson."

"Yes, indeed. If ever she loves she will love wholly. I am afraid to think what that might mean for her. She is not to be judged by ordinary standards."

And, quite unconscious of how folks discussed her, Honora held her way, spending lavishly, and indulging in every fashionable whim; but this morning she felt weary and homesick, and a great longing seized her to be at home once more. But it was the height of the London season, and Mr. Haredale would never allow her to leave for Ireland. Still, there was Eily. It was time she was out, she being now eighteen. Oh, if only she were with her! Then, quick as lightning, she rose and danced her way to Simon's study. He looked up with a frown as she entered, but Honora was not easily daunted.

"I have come to make conditions with you," she said, with an arch glance. "I promise to buy no new gowns, incur no fresh liabilities this season if you will let me have Eily here!"

She looked so lovely, with that entreaty in her eyes, that flush upon her face, one would have thought it impossible for man to deny her anything; but Simon answered, coldly:—

"I cannot consent. That wild Irish girl would disgrace me before my friends by her eccentricities!"

One look she flashed upon him.

"My sister is a lady!" was all she said, but her tone spoke volumes. And so she left him.

CHAPTER II.

The season had ended, and my lady, with her husband and her retinue of servants, were located at Abbot's Rise, Mr. Haredale's country residence. Just now the house was empty of guests, a most rare and noteworthy fact, Honora hating solitude and *the life* meetings between herself and her lord. There had been a marked coldness in her manner towards him since his refusal to allow her sister's visit.

"Eily would have a humanising effect on me," she thought. "I am growing so horribly worldly and callous. This life does not satisfy me; I am sick of it. I am just ripe for any mischief, any wickedness," she said to herself, with her customary exaggeration. "I would readily give up all I have for a sight of the dear familiar faces;" and here, indeed, she spoke the truth; "they will forget me," the little ones. I shall be as a stranger to them—



I who love them so dearly," and she moved restlessly on her couch.

The door opened, and Simon Haredale entered, an open letter in his hand.

"May I ask your attention a few moments, Honora?" he said, stiffly.

"Certainly. What is it you want?"

"I have a letter here from Maxford, an old friend of mine. He is a plantation owner, near Orleans—a cotton plantation."

"What does he want?" asked my lady, indifferently. "To come here?"

"No. Rather he wishes me to go over to him. Difficulties have arisen in the management of his concern. His servants are dishonest, and his crops inferior. He thinks I could work a reform if I would; having great confidence in my judgment."

"I darsay it is not misplaced," said Honora, sweetly. "Well, what shall you do?"

"Take the first mail out"—it struck coldly upon her, that he did not as much as plead for her consent, or consider her wishes in the least—"I can do no less. But as it would be ridiculous for you to stay on here alone, I would like to know what you propose doing?"

A great light leapt into the lovely eyes, and a bright flush stained the soft cheeks.

"Why, I shall go home. I cannot be guilty of extravagance there, you know, and it would be the height of decorum for me to return to my own people!" there was a touch of defiance in her tone, but Simon ignored it.

"I think your suggestion good; and, of course, you understand I shall defray all expenses your prolonged visit may occasion!"

"Thank you. How long shall you be from England?" she asked, as quietly as she could. She dared not give vent to her joy lest he should withdraw his consent.

"About three months, perhaps more. But I shall write you from time to time, to apprise you of my movements."

"Of course," said Honora. "I expect no less. And when do you go?"

"I think next Tuesday. You had best write to Ballyhoran to meet you at Cork, as the journey from there to your home is complicated, and horrible in the extreme. If you weary of your rustication I have no doubt some of your friends—Mrs. Warwick, for instance—will take you in."

"I shall not claim their hospitality. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing. I will make my own preparations. I know just precisely what I shall want!" and then she went out; and the door being closed behind him she executed a wild dance round the room, laughing and crying together for sheer happiness. Nor could she control herself sufficiently to write home for several hours; but at last she sat down to her davenport, and scribbled a few hurried lines to Eily, her favourite sister, and next to her in years. An answer speedily came to her hurried, half-incoherent letter.

"MY DARLING HONEY,—

"Do I sleep? Do I dream? Do I wonder and doubt?

Are things what they seem? or are visions about?

"Are you playing a trick upon us, or has old Bluebeard really consented to allow a visit to these barbarous parts?

"It is so long, so long, mavourneen, since we saw you, that my heart had no hope left of ever meeting you again; and, at times, so poor a creature am I, I used to think you had ceased to care for us. Now all the clouds are gone, and there is nothing but sunshine before us. I only hope Bluebeard will stay six months instead of three. I should not cry if he never returned."

"The governor will meet you at Cork. I begged him to share the journey, but he says he cannot afford double expenses, and I am absurd to wish or expect it."

"You must bring no more gifts to Ballyhoran. Thanks to you, we are all well clad now, but I cannot help thinking our good fortune is your misery, and I take no delight in my new and pretty gowns."

"The governor, as usual, is not too pleasant; but he will show his best side to you, for I can assure you Lady Haredale is an object for veneration in his sight."

"Patrick Pierrepont, our third or fourth cousin (I really don't know which), is staying with the Macarthy's, two miles off; but he is here every day, and proves a pleasant addition to our limited circle."

"Oh, Honey! Honey! I'll be counting the hours and the moments that shall pass between now and Tuesday; and the little ones are singing even now. 'Come back to Erin, Mavourneen, Mavourneen.' We will be all mad with expectation until your arrival, and it's you that will be devoured with kisses aron. My humble duty to the Great Megul, our love and best wishes for you.—Yours ever, "EILY."

Having read her sister's letter, Honora ran hastily up to her room, and from the recesses of an old trunk drew out a tumbled, threadbare blue serge gown.

She had preserved it as carefully as though it were a holy relic, because it had been the last thing she had worn at Ballyhoran before her marriage was an accomplished fact.

With lips all smiling, and eyes moist with unshed tears, she donned the unbecoming garment. It was short in the skirt, the sleeve, the waist. It was almost painfully tight across the bust, but Honora loved it for the sake of the memories it brought with it.

She let loose her long waving black hair, and tying the strings of a cotton sun bonnet beneath her chin, looked archly into her mirror at her own reflection.

What a lovely, roguish, youthful face it was! But its owner sighed, as she let her hands drop to their sides.

"No, I don't look the same any more than I feel the same. Oh! to be a thoughtless, happy girl once more!"

Then, with hasty hands, she stripped off her homely garb.

"How surprised and pleased they will be to see me in the old familiar dress, for I'll wear it again and again in spite of my proud position. Proud (!)—oh, dear! oh, dear! how I wish I had never married!"

But Honora was not of a lachrymose disposition, and so she presently busied herself with preparations for her journey, buying gifts for Eily and all the small fry. To the "governor" she intended carrying a Bank of England note—the most acceptable present she could offer.

Simon Haredale was to leave Abbot's Rise at early morning, my lady at five thirty p.m., so that she was there to speed the parting.

"Good-bye!" she said, offering him a slender white hand. "I hope you will have a pleasant journey, and that you will write me at your early convenience."

"Good-bye!" he answered, "and in the fastnesses of Ballyhoran don't quite forget your dignity as my wife!"

Honora bit her lips to keep back angry words that rose to them. Then she said very gravely,—

"I hope, under any circumstances, I shall not do that. Let us part kindly. Who knows that we may meet again?" and for the first time in her life she lifted her face to him to be kissed.

"I see no reason for any display of sentiment," he remarked, in his matter-of-fact tone. "Hundreds undertake my journey frequently, and, as a matter of course; I do not approve of the Darby and Joan style of business."

The blood rushed into her cheeks, and her eyes flashed dangerously.

"Neither do I!" she answered, with a short laugh; "but I thought it was the proper thing for husbands and wives to do on such an occasion," and turning on her heel she left him with great apparent calmness; but her heart was not within her, and to herself she said:

"Why did he marry me? Oh, why, why? He never loved me. He does not know what

love means. Why will he do his best to make me hate him?"

But when she was well on her journey she forgot all unpleasant things. Her husband was as though he did not exist, for all her thoughts were full of home and her dear ones, of the good times that lay before them.

The Earl met her at Cork, and Honora, with her quick sense of humour, could but laugh at the deference he paid to her wishes, the extreme cordiality of his greeting—she remembered how different his manner used to be. And then she grew brave again, being not a little ashamed at his disreputable and dissipated appearance; but she did her best to hide this from him, and Ballyhoran was not by any means a thin-skinned man.

It was late the next night when they reached home; but all the children were up, and such a kissing and embracing ensued it would be impossible to describe.

They all sat down to supper together—a noisy, happy, untidy crew—all chattering at once, all eager to impart the choicest news to Sister Honey, who had Barney (the baby of the family) on her knees.

She had never been so happy before, she said; and then, finding her so unchanged, except that she was lovelier than ever, they kissed and fondled her again, laughing and crying in sheer excitement, until Eily forcibly carried her off to the great, bare, draughty room they were to share together.

Despite her long journey and fatigue she was down first in the morning, and being bent upon forgetting the past three years she had dressed herself in the old blue serge, had let down her hair and tied on the yellow sun-bonnet, appropriated a pair of thick shoes belonging to Eily, who still slept.

Thus equipped, she went out into the balmy sweetness of the early August morning. A soft white haze partly obscured the hills and the distant sea; but it was enough for Honora that she trod her native soil, and breathed her native air.

She even took an interest in the scraggy pigs wandering at will through what was once a magnificent garden; but she quickly left them behind, and started for the open, intending to take a long walk before the late breakfast at the Castle.

But having climbed a low, broken wall, and dropped down into a green meadow, she heard a voice behind her call, "Stop a moment, Eily; what a hurry you're in!" and facing about she confronted a tall young man with remarkably golden hair, and remarkably blue eyes.

"Patrick!" she said, joyfully, extending a gloveless hand to him, "how good it is to see you again! Don't you remember me—Honora?"

And then his strong fingers clasped hers warmly.

"Really, Honora?" he asked, with a smile, that showed all his white teeth. "How could I guess that Lady Haredale would masquerade in her sister's clothes?"

"Don't call me by that name," she answered, poutingly. "I want all of you to forget I am any one but Honora MacDenn's; and, indeed, my finery is not borrowed. Perhaps you don't remember I wore these identical articles of attire before—before I left home?"

"If you remember, I was away at the time. We have not met since you were fifteen. But you aren't changed in the least, or perhaps it is that I have seen Eily growing up—and so like you—that you seem to be as familiar to me as she is. Do you know, Honey, I was quite afraid I should find you a lady of fashion—"

"Well, so I am!" she interrupted, gaily. "You should see me in my war-paint, but I am catholic in my tastes; I like to be all things to all men. In town I behave with beautiful propriety; at Ballyhoran I please myself entirely. Patrick, what were you doing so near the Castle, and so early?"

"To tell the truth the MacCarthy's rise so late that before the breakfast bell goes I am positively famished, so I generally run over here, and Eily takes pity upon me. When I saw you scudding over that wall I thought my guide, philosopher, and friend had basely deserted me, and I should be left to starve until noon."

"Poor Patrick! I had no idea you were such a gourmand, or shall I say gourmet? Come back with me, and I will get you something to eat!"

He laughed.

"I'll come back certainly, but I doubt your culinary skill; and if you've been attending a school for cookery I distinctly decline to eat of your providing. I don't wish to die of dyspepsia!"

"I'll do my best; and, really, you should not ridicule the schools. They are admirable institutions in their way, because, you see, they prevent women flying from one place to another, and keep them out of mischief; then, too, they help to reduce the surplus population. If dyspepsia carries off half our dudes, isn't that a matter for congratulation rather than grief?"

Patrick laughed, such a hearty, healthy honest laugh that Honora could only join him, and the walk to the Castle was a merry one. Arrived there they found no one astir. The two domestics did very much as they pleased, and the Ballyhoran family kept what hours they liked.

"What shall we do?" said Patrick. "I'm so hungry I could eat a haystack!"

"So am I, but I'd like something more savoury than the stack. Wait a moment, let me think. Patrick, can you build a fire?"

"I can try."

"Eureka! I know where the wood was always kept, and there are some eggs in the kitchen. Faith, we'll not go without breakfast, after all. Hurry up with the kindling," and then, as she meant business, she rolled up her sleeves beyond the dimpled elbows, and having found bread and butter proceeded to cut huge slices until she had quite a pile of them.

And Patrick having made a fire, she brought out a kettle, which he filled from the pump outside, they laughing all the while, like a couple of happy children.

In due time the coffee was made, the eggs boiled, and the two sat down to their impromptu meal.

"I'm sure a little labour sweetens one's food," said Honora, smiling across at Patrick. "This bread-and-butter tastes like angel's food!"

"It's the best thing I've ever eaten," the young man answered, helping himself to another thick slice; "but I don't know anything about its angelic properties. Honey, what would your new friends say could they see you now?"

"Only that this was a new whim of mine, and they would follow in my lead. I can assure you I am quite an important personage in society whatever I may be here."

"Oh, here! Well, you are a little goddess; the Earl is always singing his daughter's (Lady Haredale's) praises."

"Oh, yes!" scoffingly, "it's wonderful what a glamour money throws over one. No more coffee? Well, we have nearly exhausted the supply; but if you wish it I can make more?"

"None for me, thank you. Shall we go out again?"

"With pleasure." Then as they rose, an untidy, red-haired servant appeared. She looked surprised when she saw the remains of the meal.

"Shure, miss, it's meself would ha' rose early if ye'd ha' called me; 'tisn't fit the likes o' ve should demean yerself entirely by worruk o' the kind."

"Nonsense, Bridget; and as I am going out now will you tell Miss Eily I shall be back in an hour?" And out into the sunshine they went—this handsome young couple, who had such innocent, unaffected delight in each

other's society; who dreamt no more of evil or grief arising from their companionship than would a little child. The white haze had lifted now, and before them rose the green hills, and flashed the silver streak of sea. The tears rose to Honora's eyes as she turned quickly to Patrick, and, laying her hand upon his arm, said under her breath:

"I could be content to die, having once more seen these things!"

It was a very weary but very happy Honora that returned home. Eily was in the garden with some of the small fry; and eight-year-old Barney, the last to rise, was still intent upon his breakfast.

"What I love about this place," said Honora, "is its liberty. We all rise when we please, go and come at our own sweet wills—there are no rules about anything; it is just heavenly."

CHAPTER III.

"Honey, we're going to the shore; would you care to come?"

"Would I not? How many of us are going?"

"The family tribe, of course, and Patrick. I've packed up some bread and hard-boiled eggs, and we can get water at the spring. The boys will carry the basket; but, Honey, you'll spoil that smart gown with the sand and the water."

"Never mind my gown. Give me my hat, my pretty colleen, and let us be off; happy days can never be too long."

What a noisy party it was that left the Castle ten minutes later! The boys cut all manner of capers, the girls laughed and chattered in a most astonishing way, talking such utter nonsense in the brightest fashion, and Honora was the gayest of them all. She had drawn her dainty skirt up round her waist by means of a girdle, so that her movements should not be impeded, and when Emmet, the eldest boy, proposed a race she was quite ready for the fun.

"Pooh!" said Mona, a long-legged girl of fourteen, "fashionable ladies can't run—they wear such tight corsets and silly skirts"; and just to prove she was not a fashionable lady Honora competed for the prize Eily offered—an old Roman coin. She did not win, but she came in second, much to Mona's disgust, and Patrick, declaring she ought to have a consolation prize, led her off in triumph.

She was flushed and radiant, her eyes full of delight, her whole figure instinct with strong, glad young life; her long hair was blown about her face and shoulders in tangled masses, and her dress was in picturesque disorder. Simon Haredale would have been horrified to see her in such a plight; but she was not thinking of him, or, indeed, of anyone or anything not connected with the present moment and its enjoyment.

So long as she lived Honora would never forget that long, happy day down by the sea. They hunted for shells, made fortifications, paddled in the blue, unquiet water, behaving like very children. At noon they all sat down in the shadow of the rocks, and ate their frugal fare with a gusto which left no doubt as to their appreciation of it. Then Patrick told them strange and wonderful stories, and Eily sang wild lays of Ireland, whilst Honora lay back with folded hands and shut eyes, listening in a dreamy, happy state, and wishing the day might never end.

It was dusk when they trooped back to the Castle, and dinner was already served, the Earl having no idea of suiting his convenience to that of others; but he greeted them cordially, being yet in a deferential state towards his prosperous daughter.

Familiarity breeds contempt, however, and as the days wore by, and he grew more accustomed to her dainty gowns, her jewels and her laces, he treated her very much as he did the others. But Honora was now no longer afraid, and, alas! she had no love for him; in fact,

his children regarded him almost as a necessary evil.

August passed with lightning like rapidity, and Eily, who was given to watching her beautiful sister, grew anxious about her; she loved her so wholly, so faithfully. She pined her so sincerely because of her uncongenial marriage, and when she saw Patrick's unconscious devotion to her, her unconscious acceptance of it, she was troubled.

But despite her impulsiveness she was a wise little woman, and would say nothing that might hasten or bring about the catastrophes she dreaded. And Honora went her way, wholly oblivious of danger. She only knew a strange unrest possessed her, that her temper had grown less even, and that she was gay only by fits and starts. She had passed through three seasons without experiencing the least little heart-throb; though she did not love her lord, she never forgot her widowhood. Then, too, Patrick was her cousin, though but a distant one, and they had been friends from their early days, when he, a big boy of fifteen, had often stood between her and her father's wrath—she being then a tiny, willful, passionate child of ten summers, and no one thought it strange they were so often together.

The young man told her of his hopes for the future, his ambitious dreams. He was studying law, and in good time he meant to be a judge. And when he somewhat humbled his poverty she told him earnestly that it was better to be poor and happy than rich and unsatisfied; and his heart ached for her because he knew that she spoke from bitter experience.

She was so beautiful, so gracious, there was small wonder he liked her society, and he never stayed to question why he preferred it to that of Eily, who was lovely and winsome enough to please the most fastidious taste.

Early in September he walked over to the Castle to invite Honora and Eily to boat with him. The latter, however, declined, being but a timid sailor. Honora was delighted at the prospect, and hastened to get ready.

"Take plenty of wraps," said Eily. "The weather is apt to be changeable, and the wind is cool to-day, even here."

Honora laughed.

"I am not a hothouse plant!" she answered gaily, and kissing her hand to her sister, went out.

It was a brilliant morning, and Honora was in high spirits. She chatted and laughed throughout the walk to the shore where lay Patrick's boat—a mere cockle-shell of a vessel, and having helped her in, the young man took the oars, and began to pull vigorously.

"You are not tired of us yet?" he asked, lifting his flushed, handsome face a moment. "You think you can contrive to exist here until October closes?"

"It isn't existence," she answered, "it is rest, earnest, joyous life. I wish I had never to leave Ballyhoran any more."

"But there must be so much to interest and amuse you in London?"

"Yes," whilst a shadow fell upon the brightness of her face, "but there is no one to love me." Then remembering that her words were a reproach to her husband, she added swiftly, "I mean, I miss my own people so much. Oh! Patrick, it is awful to be homesick, to long and long vainly by night and day for the sight of one's dear ones, and the sound of their voices. I never knew how strong a hold they had upon my heart until I had lost them."

"Not lost them, Honey; and when a woman marries she naturally expects to leave her home for her husband's."

She stirred uneasily, as though the subject were unpleasant to her.

"But you will not be so lonely in future. I am going to town, you know, in December, and when the season begins we shall often meet."

A sudden sense of joy filled her. She had

put out her hand to meet his, but drew it back quickly, and her voice was constrained as she said:

"I shall always be pleased to see you, cousin." And a little later, to break the unusual silence which had fallen upon them, she asked, "Shall I sing to you?"

"If you will. You know I like to hear you always."

And then the wild, sweet voice broke into a strange, sad song; and as it rose and fell Patrick leaned upon his oars, drinking in the beauty of the face before him, noting the light and shadows in the ever-changing eyes.

She sang of love—hopeless love; and carried away by the passion and pathos of music and words she forgot all else, and with tears raining down her cheeks and hands fast locked she finished her ballad.

"You have saddened yourself," Patrick said, in a low, unsteady voice. "You should not sing of such sorrowful things."

She looked at him a moment, and her mouth quivered; then with angry hands she dashed aside her tears.

"I am a fool!" she said, and laughed. "I forgot it was all imaginary. Let me chase away the dismal impression I have made," and with that she broke into a merry, lilting air, and seemed wholly to forget her past emotion.

But Patrick interrupted her hastily.

"Honey, we must be getting home. The wind has changed, and I am afraid a storm is coming on."

He did not speak without reason. The sky was overcast, and the wind, suddenly gathering strength and fury, tossed the little boat hither and thither as though it were a feather. The waves broke over the sides, blinding the cousins with spray, and every moment matters grew worse. It was one of those sudden storms so common in the Irish Sea, and Patrick knew only too well what danger they were in.

"You are cold?" he said, breathlessly, for the exertion of keeping the boat in its course was telling upon him. "You are cold. Have my coat, Honora!"

"No, I shall do very well. Patrick, we are in no peril!"

"I hope not, dear," but his voice was not very reassuring. "Please Heaven, we shall soon reach the shore. You are not afraid?"

"Only a little," bravely. "Do not mind me. Is there nothing I can do to help? Let me have the oars awhile!"

But he refused. Her strength was all too small for the task before him:

And then to increase their discomfort it began to rain, and when it rains in Ireland it does it thoroughly. There is no mincing of matters, but Honora would not utter one word of complaint, although she was wet to the skin, and could scarcely see her companion through the little streams of water running down her face. Her hat was a dragged mass, its feathers hung limp and wet over her brow, and her hair becoming loosened, fell about her shoulders in damp luxuriance.

Then, suddenly, Patrick gave a sharp cry, as he lost his grasp on an oar. It was beyond his reach in a moment, and there they were on the open sea at the mercy of wind and wave. He looked at her in an anguish of self-reproach.

"Forgive me, if you can, that I have brought you into such danger!"

"You do not think we can reach home?" she asked, in a hushed voice. "You believe there is nothing left for us but to die bravely?"

He bowed his head, and she spoke again in a dreary voice:

"I would have liked to live a little longer; I am so young, and life is sweet; but—but, perhaps, it is better to go like this. Poor Eily! I should have liked to have said goodbye; she will mourn so bitterly for us!"

It was and that in such a moment she should think of her sister, but never her husband.

"Don't talk like that, honey; there may be hope for us yet. Oh! may Heaven pardon me that I brought you here!"

"I liked coming," she answered, gently.

"You shall not be angry with yourself. Neither

of us could foresee such an ending to our trip!"

And then they were silent again and motionless, for there was now nothing left them to do but to hope and pray for deliverance.

Drifting hither and thither, tossed to and fro, in momentary danger of being engulfed, cold, wet, and hungry, they bore their calamity with what fortitude they could. At last it began to grow dark.

"They will be watching for us at home," Honora said, "and Eily will be weeping—weeping bitterly and hopelessly; there will be no one to comfort her. Patrick, it will soon be quite dark. What shall we do then?"

"There is nothing we can do, dear; we are utterly helpless!"

And then, when she could see him no longer, she stretched out her hands with a little wailing cry.

"Oh, speak to me! Speak to me! While you are silent I fear the worst!"

He caught and held the chill fingers.

"Honora! Honora! do not let me die without telling you the truth I have been so long in learning. If I thought there was any hope for us I would cut my tongue out rather than speak words which, under any other circumstances, would be an insult to you. I love you! Oh, my sweet! I love you!"

Her heart seemed to stand still, and her brain reeled. She understood now all that had been vague before, and, with a sob, she said:

"Patrick! Patrick! I am glad to die now!" and those few words told him all the truth.

There, in the darkness, he sought and found her cold mouth, and kissed her once in solemn farewell, and still hand in hand they drifted on.

The morning broke bright and smiling; the wind had dropped, and it hardly ruffled the shimmering sea. There was no sign of last night's storm on shining shore, or fair, green meadows.

With a deep sigh, Patrick lifted himself upon his elbow, and immediately a pretty peasant girl came forward.

"Shure, it's kilt entirely we thought ye were when they bringed ye in."

"Where am I, and where is she?" he asked, sitting erect. "I don't understand what has happened."

"Dade, an' how should ye, seein' ye was like one dead? It was Michael Kelly and Con Malone as found ye. They were a-fishing, and the storm it came, and they made for home. Shure they was nearly wrecked, they was, but they found ye in a worse plight still, and they fastened yer boat to the smack, and towed ye in. The lady is at Mother Canty's cabin, and has slept like the angel she is."

"But what place is this?"

"Droghdaire."

"And how far from Ballyhoran?"

"Nigh fifteen miles, yer honour."

He started up.

"Bring me my clothes, please, and call the lady. No, no, my good girl," in answer to her hospitable entreaties, "we cannot stay. It is necessary we should reach Ballyhoran as quickly as possible; and, although we cannot repay your kindness, rest assured you shall be recompensed for your trouble."

Half-an-hour later he and Honora had taken train to Ballyhoran. Scarcely a word passed between them, and she was too shamefaced to meet his eyes. Oh, if she had but died! if she had but died! That was the burden of her heart's complaining. She was consumed with horror at the knowledge of her love for Patrick. Oh! why had she not been strong enough to hide it from him? She was a wife; how dared she let her thoughts and affections to centre upon him?

Eily, white as death, with swollen eyes and features, ran weeping to meet them. And as Honora felt the touch of the dear soft hands she fell about her neck with a low, wild cry, and then, before any could save her, sank to the ground in a huddled heap.

CHAPTER IV.

"I must go home! I must go home!" sobbed Honora, rocking herself to and fro. "I cannot stay here. Oh! Eily, do not try to keep me!"

"My dear, what has happened?" asked the younger girl, with her arms affectionately about her weeping sister. "Two days you have been like this, refusing to see anyone but me, and Patrick is devoured with anxiety. Honey, darling, have you nothing to tell me?"

"I am a wicked woman. Oh! I think my shame will kill me!" and a strong shuddering seized her. "I wish I had died that night at sea!"

Then Eily knelt down by her. Her face was inexpressibly sad, inexpressibly tender.

"Dear, is it Patrick? Ah, there is no need for you to answer. I know the truth, and I know, too, you have small cause to blame yourself, my poor, wronged, unhappy darling! You were bought and sold like a beast of burden—you, an innocent, ignorant child—at the mercy of two men like Ballyhoran and Haredale; but you are right and wise to go away. However great the wrong Mr. Haredale did you, you are still his wife, and the honour of his name is in your hands; but you shall not go alone. Take me with you, Honey, and I will do my best to teach you forgetfulness of—Patrick!"

"Will you come?" cried Honora, starting up. "will you, Eily? Then let us go to-morrow. I—I can't breathe here. I—I want to be at home!"

"Sit down and rest. I will do all that is necessary," and the unhappy girl gladly obeyed her.

But in the evening she cabled to Mr. Haredale that she was returning to Abbot's Rise, taking Eily with her. He did not trouble to reply until the next mail, when he remarked, with characteristic coldness, that she was quite at liberty to make her own arrangements, and from the first he had known she would quickly tire of her voluntary exile.

She laughed uncertainly as she read these words, then said pathetically:

"Oh! why will he not make my duty easier. Why will he not let me care for him?"

She had resolutely refused to see Patrick again, although it almost broke her heart to refuse his passionate entreaty for one word of farewell.

She would wrong her lord no further, and she was wholly unconscious that he had watched her going from afar, and prayed in his honest heart that all things goodly and glad should be hers, that the pain and desolation should be his alone.

She told Simon nothing of her adventure; she hoped he might never hear of it. She wanted to forget it if she could, and every trifling incident connected with it.

So she and Eily settled down at Abbott's Rise, and the people grew accustomed to the sight of the two beautiful girls riding and walking together.

They were not lonely, the county boasting many good families, so visitors were plentiful, and Eily was quite an attraction to many of the young fellows.

At one house they met the great poet. His eyes grew very pitiful as they rested on Honora's exquisite face, so softened and chastened.

"She has learned love's lesson!" he thought. "Poor girl! it has given her new beauty, but it has all but broken her heart!"

Then he went over and talked to her, and through her voice there ran the tremor of some new deep feeling, and he was confirmed in his belief.

With all his heart he pitied her, and he wondered not a little what the end would be for her. She was so young and so lonely, despite her many "friends." She was passionate and impulsive. What right had Simon Haredale to make such a nature subservient to his? and would she always be submissive to

his will? Would she always remember his lawful claim upon her?

"Heaven help her," he thought, "and keep her good as she is beautiful!"

But she was not altogether unhappy in these days, having Billy with her, and being freed from Simon's presence. It was only when her sister had gone back to Ballyhoran, and Mr. Haredale returned that she realised to the full extent the misery that had befallen her.

But she hid her secret sorrow well. She made no complaint, and the only change in her was her anxiety to please her husband, the pathetic solicitude with which she waited upon his every wish.

She could not give him love, so she offered him the next best thing—duty. At first he was not so hard to please, being elated with the success of his mission, but he soon subsided into his old manner, and finding Honora submissive, imposed not a little upon her.

In December he contested the borough of Abbot's Rise with a certain Lord Stapleford, and wished to impress his wife as canvasser; but Honora was a staunch Tory, Simon a thorough Radical, and she utterly refused to assist him.

It was a matter of principle with her, but Mr. Haredale considered she had no right to any principle that did not coincide with his, and there were high words between them.

In February they went to town, and there Simon met the Macarthys, Patrick's hospitable friends, and for the first time heard of his wife's adventure.

He was furious, being very proud of his name, and he hated to think that any scandal might attach to it. He went straight to Honora.

"Is this true?" he asked, repeating the story in a few brief sentences.

The colour flamed high in her cheeks.

"It is quite true!" she answered, in a low voice. "I am very sorry," and she lifted her beautiful eyes deprecatingly to his.

"I am more than sorry. I am surprised, ashamed, disgusted, that my wife—my wife, madam—should have been so careless of my name, should be the heroine of such a disgraceful adventure!"

"Disgraceful!" she echoed, passionately; then her hands fell to her side, and her head drooped. "You cannot regret the accident more than I do," she said, tremulously, but he was not easily pacified.

"Regrets, however sincere, will not silence people's tongues," he said, roughly. "You should have been more circumspect in your conduct. I thought I might rely upon your prudence and discretion. Whatever your other faults may be, I did not count flagrant disregard of the proprieties amongst them."

On the white cheeks there grew and burned a crimson spot.

"Mr. Haredale," she said, "do not try me too far. I am not a meek woman, and I have borne much, oh! too much more than you realise. But I have done nothing to shame you or tarnish your name. Let me pass, if you please. I am weary of these endless recriminations."

He did not seek to stay her. Perhaps in her present mood he felt she was dangerous. But often in the days that followed he reproached her with her folly, until at times she felt she must retort with violence; and vaguely he wondered over her meekness, and grew half suspicious of it.

Then in early March Patrick and she were brought face to face again. They met at Mrs. Warwick's, and unfortunately the Macarthys were present too, and one of them, a mischievous, rattle-pated girl, sat by Simon Haredale.

"Mr. Pierrepont is very handsome, is he not?" she asked, lightly. "Nearly all the girls I know are raving about him; but he seems never to think of matrimony. I don't believe he could tell if a girl were pretty or not unless it were Lady Haredale. I've often wanted to tease him about her, but never could summon courage sufficient; and then

Honora is not a flirt. But they were inseparable at Ballyhoran. How fortunate you are not a jealous husband!"

The iron-grey brows met together in a heavy frown; but Miss Macarthy was nothing if not headless, and she rattled on:

"They always were such friends as children, and everybody thought Patrick would marry his cousin—and everyone was mistaken. Mr. Haredale, you will please excuse me now. I can see Althea Brodick, and I want so much to speak to her," and then she tripped away, leaving Simon to his angry and unjust suspicions.

His eyes wandered to his wife's face. It was very pale, and there was a strained look about the mouth he had never seen there before. She was still talking to Patrick, and presently, laying her hand upon his arm, she veered round and made directly for her husband.

"Mr. Haredale," she said, "allow me to introduce my cousin, Mr. Patrick Pierrepont. I think you have not met before!"

Simon bowed stiffly.

"It is no pleasure to me that we meet now," he said, "and I do not care to form new acquaintances."

The blood mounted to the young man's face, and hasty words trembled on his lips; but Honora's entreating glance made him suppress them.

"Mr. Haredale may rest assured I shall not force my acquaintance upon him," he said, addressing Honora. "Will you tell him that, if you please? And say, too, in my circle we practise mutual toleration and courtesy."

Then he was gone; and Simon, feeling after all he had come off second best, flashed in a white heat upon his pale young wife.

"Get your wraps. I am going home. And understand, I forbid you ever to exchange words with that young coxcomb, either in or out of my presence. Do you hear, Lady Haredale?"

"I hear," she answered, quietly. "You are arbitrary, but it is my duty to obey."

"Then see that you do your duty. I am not a man to countenance insubordination, and I will not have your name linked with that fellow's."

Not a word did Honora say. It seemed that all the life and light were crushed out of her. The unexpected meeting with Patrick had tried her terribly, and she felt she could bear no more.

Reaching home she went at once to her boudoir, hoping there for privacy, but she was doomed to disappointment.

It suddenly occurred to Simon to cross-examine his wife with regard to her feelings. He had never loved her, and in many things she had disappointed him, so that now his indifference had grown into positive dislike, and his nature was cruel enough to enjoy torturing her. She had so often denied and mocked him. It was his turn now, and he meant to make the most of it.

When she heard his slow and heavy step upon the threshold she slightly turned in her chair. She had not removed one single jewel or article of attire, and above all her bravery her face gleamed white and sad.

Another man would have pitied her. Most distinctly her husband did not.

"I want to speak to you," he said, grimly.

"Are you at leisure?"

"Yes."

"I wish to know if ever you and Pierrepont were lovers? From something I heard to-night I believe you were. Tell me the truth."

"I will not lie to you," proudly. But he noticed that her hands toyed nervously with the laces and ribbons of her gown, that her bosom rose and fell agitatedly, and a gleam of triumph lit up his cold eyes. "I was too young when you married me to have any other lovers."

"That is evasive. Was Pierrepont ever a pretender to your hand?"

"No," with great distinctness. "I never met him from the day I was fifteen until I

went to Ballyhoran last August. Are you satisfied?"

"No, I am not! I want to know what passed between you then."

"Mr. Haredale, I am your wife, but that does not give you the right to insult me. In nothing have you suffered through me."

"Have I not?" he demanded, savagely. "Is not your name—my name—the subject for common gossip? I wish I had never seen you!"

"I echo that wish," bitterly. "I wish I were dead!"

"And so do I!" he retorted, roughly. "You are utterly useless to me. You have done nothing to further my interests. By my own efforts I won my seat. You might have done much; you did nothing. And I have laden you with gifts, have showered benefits upon you and yours—"

"Stop!" she cried, her great eyes flashing fire. "You may go too far. You have been generous with your money, but you have starved me of affection. Let it pass—only, only have some compassion upon my youth; and then she stretched out beseeching hands to him, and all her lithe young form was shaken with sobs.

In that hour she was weak, and at his mercy. Rest assured he would not spare her. He grasped the slender wrists in a cold and cruel grasp.

"You shall tell me the truth," he said. "You are so changed; there must be a great reason for that change. Did Patrick Pierrepont never breathe one word of love to you?"

"Have pity; oh, dear Heaven, have pity!" and she tried to shield her shame-stricken face from him, but he held her fast, watching with cruel satisfaction the slow tears fall and stain her pale cheeks.

"I shall not let you go until you make complete confession."

She lifted her head then, and a little of her old spirit came to her.

"We were alone together, death staring us in the face. We did not hope ever to reach the shore again; and—and—oh! cannot you guess? Must I tell you all? He told me I was dear to him!"

"This is interesting! And may I inquire, Lady Haredale, what response you made?"

"I said I wished I might die then," she answered, with a little wild cry. "There is nothing more to tell. Loose me—let me go! Oh! that man can be so cruel!" and then she snatched her hands from his, and falling on her knees hid her face in the cushions of her chair, shuddering with the fierce emotion possessing her. A moment he stood over her, a cynical smile curving his thin lips.

"I shall know how to take care of you in the future," he said. "I thought I could trust you, but learning how mistaken I have been I shall guard you more carefully"; and then he went out, satisfied because he had humbled that poor child to the very dust.

With the new day came new trials. Perhaps Simon Haredale did not really doubt his wife, but he professed to do so; and not a letter came to her that he did not first read—the letter-bag being always carried to him.

Sometimes he would retain possession of them for two or three days before so much as telling her they have arrived; but Honora uttered no remonstrance.

She was very meek in those days, and had such a painful sense of her own shortcomings. She often met Patrick in society, but no word passed between them; and he would not augment her misery by forcing himself upon her notice.

It was observed by all that Lady Haredale was losing much of her brilliancy, that she had grown pale and ethereal in her appearance; and many speculations were rife as to the cause of the change, but only the poet knew.

And between husband and wife matters daily grew worse. Strive as she would Honora could not please, and the time was near

when she would no longer make the effort, or endure Simon Haredale's insults. She was not naturally meek, and she had borne much.

CHAPTER V.

Things went from bad to worse, until at times Honora was almost desperate. It was in this frame of mind she attended a ball given by a great leader of society, and she had taken special pains with her toilet, so that Simon might have no cause for complaint on that score.

She wore white—pure white, without a fleck of colour to mar its stainlessness. There were pearls about her throat and wrists—pearls in the raven masses of hair, in the tiny ears; and she looked almost like a being from another world, with her white, sad face, and deep grave eyes.

"One would think from your attire," growled Simon, "you were a bride or *débutante*! It is so utterly insipid, and you have grown too pale for it. For Heaven's sake, my lady, impart some colouring to it!"

A faint flush rose to her cheeks, but without a word she took a deep crimson rose from a vase close by, and fastened it on her breast. Then, without a word, she went down and allowed him to assist her into the carriage.

She had no heart for gaiety; but Simon had insisted she should attend this ball, and, thinking bitterly "He is my master, he has a right to command," she yielded.

She wished she had not, when she entered the flower-wreathed, perfumed room, for the first to meet her was Patrick.

One glance he gave at the pale changed face, and then he went towards her. She was in trouble, he must do his best to help her. Surely his love gave him that right?

"You will give me one dance?" he said, quietly, ignoring Simon.

"I think not!"

"But," with a flash in his eyes, "we are relatives, and unpleasant remarks are already being made upon our apparent enmity."

Now Simon Haredale hated nothing so much as criticisms of himself and his belongings; so he said, sourly:

"Give your cousin, your 'tablets,' and Patrick, taking them from Honora, scribbled his initials beside the first waltz. But he had no intention of dancing. He must see her alone for a few moments. The change was so grievous to him that he feared the worst. Where were all her smiles and roguish speeches? Where was the brilliancy which had marked her out from all other women? Gone! She was but the shadow of her old self; her face wore the impress of grief. Perhaps Simon Haredale did not rest content with words alone. Perhaps he even struck her (in this he wronged the man), and he remembered that her mother had died of a slow, wasting ailment. He must save her! She might never be to him more than she was now; but love should be unselfish, should not seek its own, and so he said within himself: "At any cost, I must rescue her from this cruel life!"

When their waltz came he went to her.

"I am not going to dance," he said, with quiet authority. "I want to talk instead, so come with me into the conservatories; they are quite deserted now!"

Without a word she obeyed. She hardly cared, that night, what she did, and she was blissfully unconscious that Simon was following in their wake; that when they halted he halted too, and screening himself behind a mass of greenery, listened and watched.

He had not found his matrimonial venture answer his expectations. His wife was not the meek Griselda he wished her to be. He wanted to gain unlimited power over her, and he believed to-night would give him that authority he craved!

"Well!" said Patrick, in so low a voice that Simon found it hard to catch his words, "well, what have you to tell me, Honey?"

"There is nothing to tell," wearily; "nothing new!"

"You are hiding something from me. You think it your duty to screen that wretched husband of yours from just punishment. Honora, does he strike you?"

"Oh, no," with a hard little laugh. "It has not come to that. He would not dare. But, Patrick, if you only wished to speak of him I must decline to prolong our interview. He is my husband; it is not for me to complain. Let me hide my skeleton as best I may!"

"But I cannot bear to see you thus unhappy! It unmans me."

"No life is utterly without shadow," she said, patiently. "Only the shadow has fallen on mine so early, and found me so unprepared to meet it. I used to be such a happy, light-hearted girl. When I remember myself as I was I could cry for pity—not for myself, but for the Honora that was then. She never dreamt of sorrow. She was full of strong, animal life, and everything looked bright to her. Sometimes, I think, she might have grown into a good woman under other circumstances. She had such capacities for love!"

"Don't!" the young man said, hoarsely. "It hurts me to hear you speak of yourself as though you were dead. Oh, Honey! Honey! ours is a hard fate! My dear! oh, my dear! is there nothing I can do for you?"

"Nothing but to leave me to myself. It is better so. I—I am not so strong as I used to be, and I might not always be able to do my duty—to my husband if we met often. And with Heaven's help I will keep my marriage vows to the letter. Alas! alas! if I could only keep them in the spirit! Dear Patrick, have no fear for me. Other women are more unhappily situated than I. Other women are beaten and publicly insulted. I suffer no such brutality, no such degradation."

"But you are daily wasting under the burthen you bear! Honora, will you go back to Ballyhoran?"

"No. What reception do you think my father would give a runaway wife? Don't you know yet? He would sell his soul for gold, and that he believes money is the one good thing. Then remember how harshly this nice charitable world of ours judges a woman who leaves her husband. Only under extreme pressure will I quit the shelter of his home. My name is dear to me. I could not suffer shame and live!"

"But you will let me see you now and then? If you are in trouble you will send for me? You will let me spend myself in your dear service!"

"No, not!" wildly, and her hands went up to clasp her aching temples. "I dare not. Oh, I dare not! I am best alone. Oh, far best. And you, Patrick, leave me now. I should like to rest here a little while; the light and music bewilder me. Good-bye, good-bye!"

He had taken her hands in his, and now he held them fast, unconscious of the malevolent face gleaming white through the green foliage.

"Kiss me," he entreated. "Kiss me once, in token of farewell. I hoped to do so much for you; I have done nothing. Honey! Oh, my dear!" but she snatched her hands from his hold.

"Go," she said. "It is shame enough for me to love you. I will wrong Simon Haredale no further. Good-bye. Forget me, and be happy."

Without a word he went, and that poor soul sank upon her knees, praying wildly that death might come to her whilst she knelt. And even as she prayed Simon issued from his hiding-place; and, bidding her rise, told her harshly he had both heard and seen all that had passed between herself and Patrick Pierrepont.

She dragged herself to her feet.

"Then you know that I am your true wife, even though I do not love you!" she said, heavily.

He laughed scoffingly. He knew she was good and innocent; perhaps he hated her the more for that.

"Let me have no heroics; they are out of place here," he said. "Draw your cloak about you, and come back with me to the house. I want our friends to see what a loving couple we are!"

"Let me go home!" she entreated. "I am not well. Indeed, I speak the truth!" but he would not hear her.

"You boasted of your intention to do your duty. Your duty is to obey me."

"As you will," she answered, with a flash of her old spirit, "but there is a limit to everything. Obedience may become impossible, and human patience is not exhaustless!" Then she drew her cloak about her shoulders, and lightly touching his arm with her hand went back to the gay throng. But it was noticed that night by many she didn't dance, and a whisper went round that Lady Haredale was going as her beautiful mother had gone, and that her lord was the only creature who refused to see this.

They left early, and the drive home was a quiet one; but in the privacy of the drawing-room Simon spoke his mind freely, until the slumbering passion in Honora's heart woke into keener life. She sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing, her bosom heaving.

"Silence!" she said, "silence! I will not suffer such contumely! Oh, coward, so to insult a helpless woman!"

"Neither helpless nor friendless," he retorted, "having so gay a gallant for your champion!"

She went quite close to him, and looked fearlessly into his cold eyes.

"If you have a single manly instinct you will not drag the absent into this most unseemly quarrel. Vent your malice upon me. The law will not help me so long as you neither strike nor desert me—and I am too proud to complain."

He was mad with anger at her defiance, and he spoke such words as were a shame for him to utter and for her to hear. If possible, her white face grew whiter yet, and a wild light leapt into her lovely eyes; but when she spoke her voice was very low, and he knew he had goaded her to rebellion.

"All is over between us," she said, in soft, cold tones. "You have left me no alternative. I will live with you no longer, let the world say what it will. I will never forgive you the vile words you spoke. I am no more your wife." She stripped off her wedding-ring, and laid it on the table before her. "Do not try to coerce me. I prefer death to a renewal of this wretched life. If you can legally free yourself of an unloved and unloving wife, lose no time in doing so!" and then she passed out of the room, and up to her own chamber.

She locked the door against all intruders, and sat down to think over her future. She never would forgive Simon's gross insult; she never again would sit at his table, or wear the jewels and dainty gowns he provided—so she said to herself, and she was not a woman to break her word. She would leave him and the old life behind. In some way she would earn her bread, and it would be the sweeter for the struggle made to win it.

Simon Haredale really wished he had controlled his passion more, and acknowledged to himself that he had tried Honora a little too far, but he never doubted her ultimate surrender. She had been so meek of late. Then, too, he hated to figure in a scandal, and was half-inclined to hold out the olive branch to her. So he went to bed and slept heavily until quite late in the morning. Breakfast was prepared for him, but Honora was not at the table.

"Where is her ladyship?" he asked a servant, irritably.

"She has gone out, sir, and she told me to say she was not coming back!"

CHAPTER VI.

The shock of the news was terrible to Simon. For a moment he could not speak; for a moment he doubted the utter purity of the girl whose heart he had done his best to break. After all, there would be a scandal, and he writhed when he thought of that. Then he asked the curious, watchful servant:

"Did her ladyship say where she was going?"

"No, sir! She said she would write to you in a few hours, and I was not to tell you she had gone until you inquired for her. I hope, sir, that you will not discharge me; I only obeyed orders!"

"I shall not discharge you; but I shall be obliged if you will keep this matter as quiet as possible. If any one calls inquiring for me, say that I shall be in shortly."

He hardly knew what he intended doing as he traversed the busy streets, and almost unconsciously his steps turned towards Patrick's chambers. But when a little way from them he saw him coming, his arm linked in that of a friend; they were discussing some legal problem eagerly, and passed without seeing him, although by stretching out his hand he could have touched them.

So she had not sought refuge with her lover, and a flush of shame crimsoned his cheek that he could for a second hold her guilty of such a crime. Where should he seek her? Had she already started for her own home? Hardly that, for her father would be the first man to uphold Simon's authority, and send her back to him. Had she, in her mad despair and outraged dignity, taken the life which, but for him, might have been so fair? He shuddered and grew pale at the thought—if she were dead, would an English jury hold him guilty of her death?

But Honora, despite all the sadness of her life, had never meditated such an awful step, neither had she dreamed of returning to Ballyhoran, and her father's coarse abuse. When she turned her back upon her home she went straight to Mrs. Warwick, her true friend and adviser. It was still early, and the lady had not left her boudoir; but she gave orders for Honora to join her, and when she entered, rising, took the slender cold hands in hers.

"My dear, what does this mean?"

"It means I have left my husband and my home for ever!" tragically.

"Oh, no, no! It cannot be so bad as that!"

"It is; and I have come to you for help. You will not refuse it?"

"No; but perhaps reconciliation is possible.

It is an awful step you meditate. Honora, dear, the world is very hard upon women who leave their lords."

"I know. But wild horses should not drag me back again! I will die first! I have suffered in silence so long, so long! I have borne so much! But last night he spoke such awful words to me—of me—that no woman would ever forget or forgive. I can't go home to my father. You know what manner of man he is, and how hard it is to find food and clothing for them all? I have no one in the world to help me if you refuse!"

"I have told you I will not, dear. But, oh, I am afraid for you! You are so young and so beautiful to be alone. Take care you do not spoil your life."

"It is already spoiled!" bitterly. "The only thing I can hope for now is peace, and a chance to win my bread. In my trouble I remembered you, and something you said the other day. When do you start for Melbourne?"

"At the earliest opportunity. It is Gregory's only chance," and the young wife's face saddened. Her husband's health had long been a source of anxiety to her, and now the medical men had declared nothing but a sea voyage could save him. "We should have gone by the *Hopeful* last week but for the children's sakes."

"Then you have found no one yet to take charge of them?" eagerly.

"No, it is a difficult task. Oh, my little darlings! how shall I bear to leave them?"

"Will you give me charge of them? They love me. You know I would do my duty towards them and you. Don't say no, Lucille?"

"You will go back from your bargain when Mr. Haredeale apologises."

"I shall not! No apologies will blot out his offence!" and the beautiful mouth looked very resolute, the grey eyes were full of angry indignation.

"Dear Honora, there is no one to whom I would confide my children so willingly as to you. But I hardly think you understand what your position would be. You are accustomed to luxury and society. Well, Beechey House, where the children are to reside until we return, is a six-roomed cottage in the hamlet of Beechey, a most remote Devonshire district. The only attendant will be a middle-aged, capable woman (Briggs); and the salary we offer the lady who is willing to bury herself alive is only forty pounds. We are by no means rich, and Gregory's illness has caused us many fresh expenses."

"Before I married, forty pounds would have seemed a fortune to me! Lucille, will you accept my services?"

"Yes, dear, if Mr. Haredeale has nothing to urge against your plan."

"He will not interfere; he will be glad to know he is rid of me. And I will take Mamie and Grace to Beechey to-morrow if you wish. The earlier we go the happier I shall be."

Then she sat down and wrote to Simon; and this is the letter that was awaiting him on his return home:—

"I have left you for ever. Nothing will induce me to renew the old relationship; the words you have spoken have raised an impassable barrier between us. I tried to do my duty honestly as your wife, but you would not allow me to succeed. I ask nothing of you, I will accept nothing. In casting off the cruel fetters that so long have bound me I cast aside everything but my own dignity, and my own self-respect. Your name I leave you stainless as on the evil day it first was mine. Should you desire to know anything connected with our household arrangements you can communicate with me at Beechey House, Beechey, Devon. For the rest, may you be happier without me than ever you have been with me."

"HONORA."

So she was gone. The letter dropped from his hand, and he sat gazing out of the window with vacant eyes. Then he murmured slowly:

"The termagant! Well, let her go! Who cares? And there need be no scandal."

Neither was there. When it became known Mr. and Lady Haredeale had separated, the cause assigned for such an act was "incompatibility of temper;" and some commiserated Simon, some Honora, and spoke of the sudden change in her, whispering that Simon had not been the most amiable of husbands.

She had shone for three seasons like a brilliant star, and now that her glory was dimmed it was best, she should be forgotten. And before the summer ended the fashionable world had ceased to discuss her or speculate on her probable woes.

Simon never replied to her letter. If she had not shamed him she still had made him appear ridiculous, and the man's hard nature would not forgive that offence. So he shut up his town house, giving Honora's finery over to the moths and the dust, sending her jewels to his bankers.

He went into chambers, gave *récherché* dinners, dabbled a little in literature, and a great deal in politics, and did his best to forget the beautiful girl-wife away in Devon. When he remembered her it was to wish her dead.

Honora herself was not wholly unhappy. She loved her little charges. The healthy, simple life suited her; and, despite all her

trouble, all the passionate yearnings of her passionate young heart, the colour came back into her cheeks, and only by looking into the depths of her sad eyes could one guess that she had not passed through life untouched by grief.

From Eily she heard frequently, and her letters were a source of comfort to her. The Earl, too, wrote at first in an expostulatory tone; but when he found she paid no heed to his remonstrances, he stormed and blustered in a fashion that would have disgraced a bargee.

So Honora preserved a dignified silence, and for the future consigned all his letters, unread, to the flames. It was the wisest thing she could do under the circumstances.

Once, too, Patrick had written, begging her to accept the half of his small income, and praying permission to correspond with her. It is needless to say she refused both requests, although, indeed, she would have been glad to receive news of him; but in her peculiar position she must abstain even from the appearance of evil. Those she loved, those who loved her, should never wear the blush of shame because of her.

So she held on her way resolutely—such a changed Honora; so gentle, so unselfish, so ready to yield her will to others. She who had ever been wilful, so untiring in her care of the little ones, so sympathetic with the poor around that they regarded the "lovely lady" almost as an angel.

Of what she suffered then she said no word. Honora Haredeale was not a woman to wear her heart upon her sleeve, being proud as she was, pure.

In November she received news from Ballyhoran. Eily was to be married—not sacrificed. A young English gentleman of fortune, staying with the Macarthy's, had seen and fallen in love with the beautiful Irish girl, who fully reciprocated his affection.

"The governor," wrote Eily, "will not hear of your return for my marriage; but Walter (isn't it a pretty name?) says I shall not be disappointed of my wish to see you. And so, Honey Mavourneen, prepare for our coming. We shall be with you on the twentieth, just a fortnight after our wedding; and, oh! my dear, my poor, unhappy dear! I hope you will like Walter for my sake. I am blessed beyond all girls, but I do not like to boast of my fortune to you who have sorrowed so long and suffered so much. One thing more, aroon, Walter bids me say that when your engagement ends you are to consider my home yours, because my sister must be dear to him as his own!"

Honora wept a little over that letter; she was not much accustomed of late years to kindness, and then she set to work to improve the rooms the newly-married pair were to occupy, so the time passed quickly enough.

On the twentieth she dressed herself carefully in one of her new plain toilets, and awaited with what patience she could for the arrival of her guests.

Eily had distinctly said she did not wish her to meet them at the primitive station, because she was sure to behave like a donkey.

But when Honora heard the rumble of the rickety old fly wheels she ran out to the gate; and Eily, disclaiming all assistance to alight, rushed to meet her; but not a word did either say until she had cried and laughed a little; then Eily began:

"Oh! Honey, aroon, how pale you are, how my heart has bled for you! You never doubted my love for you, did you, mavourneen, even when I found a new love—"

"Who is waiting to be introduced. I am Walter Austin, Lady Honora, and I intend being a model brother!"

He was a very pleasant looking young fellow, with honest, well-opened blue eyes, and Honora's heart warmed towards him.

"I am sure we shall be good friends," she said, giving him her hand; and so, indeed, from that day forth, through all their lives they were.

CHAPTER VII.

March had come, March with its cold winds and pale sunshine; still, March with a growing promise of beauty, for the daffodils were showing their pale green buds, and little tender shoots were visible on tree and shrub. Everything was waking to life; but on his bed lay the member for Abbot's Rise—dying!

He had succumbed all at once to a complication of diseases, and the doctors who came and went looked grave as they bent above him.

He did not himself believe there was danger. He had always been such a strong, active man until now, and he had lived so temperately. He was not an old man yet, but a little passed fifty, so he was very hopeful of recovery.

But it was lonely lying in the great stately chamber, tended only by hirelings. He had not a relative in all the world. He had never thought or cared about this before. He had never tried to form any real friendship, but now he did wish there was someone to remember him, and to affectionately minister to his wants.

There was his wife, of course; but she had left him, and he would never forgive her. The day after her flight he had made a new will, revoking all his former bequests, and leaving his colossal fortune exclusively to charities. There were no legacies to his servants; they were paid for their services well through his life, why should his death benefit them?

Now, as he lay on his bed, he grimly smiled: "Her ladyship would like to know of my illness. She would be more rejoiced still at news of my death; but it won't benefit her pecuniarily. No, she shan't have a penny of my money. If she counts on my repentance—and for what have I to repent?—she will be delightfully disappointed!"

The thought was pleasant to him, and afforded him satisfaction throughout the day.

But that very night he became so violently ill that his physicians were summoned in hot haste. Simon, with all his faults, was no coward, and bore his agony (which must have been extreme) with the stoicism of an Indian brave.

"Am I in danger?" he asked, quietly.

"You have been so from the first, Mr. Haredale. I feel it my duty to tell you, if there is anything you wish to do, any friend you wish to see, there is no time to lose."

The man's heart gave one wild leap, and for a moment a frantic terror flooded all his being. But he gave no sign, and presently asked:

"How long do you give me, doctor? Let me know the truth."

"Humanly speaking, I do not think you can last longer than three days. All that could be done to save you has been done, but you are beyond mortal skill!"

"Thank you," Simon answered, in a low tone. "You may leave me now. I have got my death sentence, I want to think it over"; and being left alone he turned his grey face to the wall, and fought fiercely with the agonising fears that tortured him. He clung to life with dog-like tenacity—not that his life had been a particularly happy one; but then

"The weariest and most loathed earthly life
Is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

At least, so it was with Simon. And he lay through all the dark hours of that dark night, struggling with that nameless, awful horror possessing him. And then he thought bitterly when he was gone, there would be no one to mourn for him, or pause to drop a tear upon the grave where he lay low.

Looking back through all the years which had gone, he could not recall one kindly action or generous deed of his, which had gladdened some weary heart. He had been upright and just in all his dealings, but never generous; and now he could remember so many cases where his help had been prayed and coldly refused—so many times, when he might have relieved some cruel necessity, and had failed to do so.

He had been so anxious only to add pound to pound, to increase the fortune bequeathed him by his father, that he had never had time to form friendships, or indeed, to give a thought to the affections.

And then his mind strayed to Honora, and he saw now, how from the first he had wronged her, how his coldness had changed, and for awhile had warped all her better nature. What a bright girl she had been when first they met, and how earnestly in the early days of their marriage she had striven to please him, and to win a word of kindness from him!

The scales had fallen from his eyes now with a vengeance, and in shuddering humility he prayed:

"Heaven forgive me. I have behaved like a fiend. I deserve to die as I have lived! alone!" and yet, oh yet, what an awful sense of desolation was upon him! He wondered how Honora looked now, and if he sent for her, would she come? She had just cause to refuse any bequest of his. What a triumph for her to know she had it in her power to refuse him any boon! No, he would not summon her to his side. He was not yet brought down to the dust. But when morning came he could bear the reproaches of his conscience no longer. Should he leave that young creature, bound to him by every law of Heaven and man, poor and helpless in a cruel world? He could not do it; so a messenger was despatched for his solicitor, who came in haste, Simon Haredale being a client of importance.

The old will was destroyed, and by the new Honora was made legatee of all Simon's fortune, with the exception of a few charitable bequests.

He placed no restrictions upon her, and only begged that in the event of her marrying a second time, the ceremony should not take place before a year had passed. He felt happier and more restful when he had done her this tardy justice, and fell presently into a deep sleep; and as he slept he dreamed that Honora came to him, not proud and cold, as when he had last seen her, but with tears in her lovely eyes; and that she forgave him freely and fully all the pain and sorrow he had made her suffer.

When he awoke the dream was still strong upon him. He turned to his valet.

"You know your mistress's address. Telegraph for her. No, give me a pencil, let me write the message myself;" and he feebly traced the lines. "I am dying. In token of your forgiveness come to me!"

He waited impatiently for her reply, and when it arrived, tore open the envelope with trembling, feverish fingers.

"I am on my way. Shall be with you to-night!" and then he fell back upon his pillows. The excitement had been too great for him, and for very long he lay in a heavy swoon.

But towards evening he rallied, and as the time drew near for Honora's arrival he insisted that the room should be made bright with flowers, and all evidences of sickness, so far as possible, removed.

"She was always fond of dainty things," he thought, and his heart grew tender to her then. Ah! said it was he had closed it so fast against her in the old days.

Honora reached Abbot's Rise about nine. She was very pale, and trembled slightly. Although she had never loved him, still he was her husband, and it was sad to think he was dying all alone.

As she entered the room he looked eagerly towards her; and saw her as he had done in his dream, tearful and pitiful; and with a sigh of pure gratitude, he put out his hand to her.

"Honora, this is good of you!" he said.

"It is more than I deserve."

She sank on her knees beside the bed.

"I am so sorry, so sorry!" she said, tremulously. "I did not know, or I would have been with you before."

"You are heaping coals of fire upon my head!" he murmured. "You poor child,

how can you ever forgive me, or think of me without loathing?"

"Hush!" she said, ever so gently. "Let the dead past bury its dead, and I, too, was to blame. I was very wild and troublesome."

"And I made no allowance for your youth. I did not care about your happiness. Oh! wife—wife—I have wasted all my chances. I have done nothing good or great in all my days—and now my time is over!"

"We must all plead guilty to doing the things we ought not to have done, and leaving those things undone we ought to have done," she answered gravely. "Simon, if we could only begin again, how much better we would do!"

It was the first time she had ever called him by his Christian name, and it touched him to the heart—that heart which, until now, when it was too late for love and joy—had lain cold and dead within his breast.

"Then you do not wish me gone? You are not in a hurry to be free?"

And then she rose and kissed him on the brow with a tenderness that had something maternal in it. Next she threw off her wraps, brought him wine to drink, and sitting beside him held his hand in her strong, warm clasp. Nor would she leave him any more until the end, but snatched a few moments' sleep, sitting in the great easy-chair.

All through the third day it was evident he was sinking fast; but although his sufferings were intense he made no moan, and to the last he was conscious.

He could not bear Honora to leave his side a moment, and he would take nothing save from her hands. Once he said with a little sigh:—

"Oh! what I have missed! what I have missed! I might have made you love me, but I never tried—I never tried." And then a little later, as the light of life burned low, "Will you kiss me, wife?" And for the first and last time their lips met. When Honora drew back there were tears upon Simon's face, which were not all her own.

He lay very quiet, and she thought he slept. There was such peace on the worn face, such a new and inexplicable tenderness about the mouth, which had always been so grim and hard.

But at the dawning of a new day he opened his eyes, and a sudden light of recollection and satisfaction flashed into them. He feebly put out his hand to reach hers, and as feebly murmured:—

"Have no fear of the future. I—I have—not—left—you—penniless!" and those were his last words.

He gradually sank into a stupor, breathing slowly and faintly. At the rising of the sun Honora was a widow. Realising this she gave one sharp, quick cry. Then, worn with her watching and ministrations, she sank into a huddled heap upon the floor, and for awhile was wholly oblivious of all that had gone, all that was passing.

It was a startling surprise to her to find herself the possessor of so great a fortune. At first she could not believe the evidence of her own senses, but when she had grasped the truth, and realised all that this meant for her and her dear ones, the quick tears came to her eyes, and there would never be a time when she would not remember Simon Haredale with grateful tenderness.

She went back to Beechey for two months, and then on the Warwick's return she sent for Mona and the boys to Abbot's Rise, the Earl being only too happy to part with his numerous brood.

It was not long before Mona left for a home of her own. "Those Ballyhoran girls had such luck," a jealous young lady observed. "They all secured good *partis*, for Mona married a rich baronet, who positively adored her."

Then, though it was a cruel wrench, Honora sent the boys to Eton, impressing upon them the necessity of making the most of their

golden opportunities, and bidding them for her sake and the sake of their ancient name to be brave and honest gentlemen.

Their vacations they would spend with her. Indeed, it was soon impossible for them to return to Ballyhoran, as the Earl contracted a marriage with an illiterate woman, widow of a wealthy butcher, who was violently opposed to receiving her stepchildren.

So Honora lived her quiet, lonely life, whilst the seasons came and went, whilst the summer faded into autumn, and autumn fled at the advent of winter. Then came the new year; but the spring had ripened into summer before Patrick sought her out. Pride had restrained him, and her fortune had stood between them. Then, too, she might have changed. But at the close of June he called his recreant courage to the fore, and went down to Abbot's Rise.

He found her walking in the gardens, and when she saw him coming she stood still, her colour ebbing and flowing, trembling so greatly she could scarcely support herself.

"Honora—Honey," he said, in a voice husky with emotion, "I have come back to you!"

"Yes," she said, under her breath, and waited for him to speak again.

"You know why I have come, and what hope I nurse? If I am presumptuous, tell me now, and I will go away to trouble you no more. But oh, my darling! oh, my darling! no man will ever love you so well as I. No man hold you so dear, reverence you so highly! Tell me, what will you do with me? Am I to go or stay?"

She looked at him, smiling through her tears.

"You need not go," she said, and the lovely colour grew upon her cheek as she yielded herself to his embrace.

"But," said Patrick, after a long, ecstatic pause, "I am a poor and struggling man. You might do better, Honey."

"I never could do better than marry the man I love with all my heart."

A speech which met with its just reward.

What need to chronicle their sayings and doings further? It is enough that they were married, and, as the old fairy tales say, "lived happily ever after."

[THE END.]

THE CREED OF THE CHEERFUL MAN.

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

SOME AMERICAN JINGLES

Five, ten, fifteen, twenty,
Little girls are always plenty.
Turn the rope—jumping's fun!
If I trip—you're number one.

What did Joe catch when he went down to fish,
Enough speckled trout to fill a big dish?

The day it was dark, and the wind it was bold,
And all that Joe caught, that we saw, was—a cold.

May and Jay ran down the hill
To bring some water from the rill.

May fell in, on the slippery stones;
Jay fished out all her broken bones.

"Cobos," calls Molly, in her soft, gentle way,
As with bright pail and stool she trips o'er the grass.

The cows hear the kind voice; they make no delay;
See! they come to be milked by the sweet,
brown-eyed lass.

Facetiæ

HZ: "I declare, Miss Angelina, you treat me worse than your dog!" She: "Oh, Mr. de Mogyns, how can you say so? I'm sure I never make the slightest difference between you!"

MISS HAZELEYNS (to absent-minded but enamoured Mr. Mallow): "Come, Mr. Mallow, won't you join us and take a hand?" Mr. Mallow: "Ah—er—thanks awfully. I will accept yours."

MAGISTRATE (sternly): "Why did you attempt to escape? Don't you know that the way of the transgressor is hard?" Culpit: "That's just why I tried to get out of the way, your honour."

LADY: "That ivory ornament you sold me was not ivory, but celluloid. When it came near a gas-jet it blew up." Dealer: "Maybe the task came from a circus elephant. Some of 'em are hard drinkers."

"What do you think of my week-old whiskers?" he asked, proudly, as he coaxed them gently to stay in sight. "They look like weak, old whiskers," she answered, with a cruel intonation of scorn.

A BAD DAY FOR DOGS.—First City Sportsman: "Just back from a hunting trip, I see. Get any game?" Second City Sportsman (who did considerable unintentional killing): "No, I had to come home; ran out of dogs."

"Is it now considered ill-bred to take the last biscuit off the plate?" queried Richelieu of Waggle. "Well, no; but it is decidedly unwise." "Unwise?" "Yes; always wait a minute, and they'll bring on some hot ones."

A TRUE SIGN OF DEATH.—"Are you superstitious?" "Not very. Why?" "Do you believe that it is a sign of death when a dog howls under your window at night?" "Yes, if I can find my gun before the dog gets away."

CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.—A small boy of our acquaintance admires his clergyman. He says: "I would like to be a minister, if I could be a nice minister like him. If I can't be that, I should like to be a tramcar conductor."

THE LATEST INVENTION.—Infuriated Citizen (to organ grinder): "I say, Garibaldi, move on with that measly music. My wife is sick." Organ Grinder (grinding away): "Si signor, droppa penny cen ze slots and hear it stoppa playing."

In an advertisement by a railway company of some uncalled-for goods, the letter "l" had dropped from the word "lawful," and it read: "People to whom these packages are directed are requested to come forward and pay the awful charges on the same."

"And so you think you will get married when you grow up to be a young lady, Flossie?" said the caller. "Oh, I haven't a doubt of it," asserted Flossie. "Everybody says I am very much like my mamma, and she, you know, has been married three times."

"How would you like some brandied peaches of my own make?" asked a benevolent old lady of a tramp. "I don't want to put you to so much trouble, mum," replied the hardened vagabond. "You needn't mind the peaches; a little of the brandy will suit me."

A MAN named Marrow was recently with a friend, meeting some of the newspaper men. When Colonel Mussey came up the friend remarked: "Colonel Mussey, let me present my friend, Mr. Marrow." "Ah, Mr. Marrow," said the colonel, "glad to meet you. Are you related to the Bonapartes?" "Not that I know of," responded the gentleman, innocently, and the colonel took his little joke out in the back yard and broke it open with an axe.

GUEST (to hotel clerk): "I've met that gentleman who just went out before somewhere. His face is very familiar, but to save my life I can't call his name." Clerk: "His name is Smith; he is one of the officials at Wandsworth prison. Your bill is two pounds, sir."

WIFE: "I found an egg in the coal-bin this morning. That's a queer place for a hen to lay in." Husband: "Just the place, my dear; just the place." W.: "Just the place?" H.: "Why, certainly. If our hens begin to lay in coal for us, we won't need to mind how the price goes up."

A VERDICT NOT REACHED.—Judge (to Jury): "Have you agreed upon a verdict? Is the prisoner guilty or not guilty of the crime charged in the indictment?" Foreman: "We have not yet reached a verdict, your honour. I missed my pocket-book in the night, and I would respectfully ask that each juror be searched."

PRETTY SCHOOL-TEACHER: "James, is 'to kiss' an active or a passive verb?" James (eldest boy in the class): "Both." Pretty School-Teacher: "How is that, James?" James: "Active on the part of the feller, and passive on the part of the girl." Pretty School-Teacher blushes, and marks James "perfect in grammar."

"Docron, I am afflicted with soreness of throat, which is a great annoyance to me. I sing in the choir, you know." "Yes, I hear you every Sunday." "Could you not tell me what I can do that will effect a satisfactory cure?" "Certainly. I can recommend a cure that will be satisfactory to all concerned." "What's that?" "Quit singing."

An old Scotchwoman, very fond of gossip and a dram, was induced to sign the temperance pledge. Calling upon a friend one day the bottle was produced and a glass handed to her. "Na, na, Mrs. Mitchell," said the gossip. "I have signed the pledge ne'er to touch nor handle a glass again; but, if ye'll put a wee drop in a cup, I'll tak' it."

"Are all arrangements for the banquet made?" "Very nearly. But we haven't selected a man to respond to the third toast yet." "Snipeworthy would be a good man." "Snipeworthy? Why, he can't make a speech! Whenever he tries it, he breaks down in the first sentence, and subsides." "Well, that is the reason why I suggested his name. He's the kind of a speaker to have at a banquet."

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD THEME.—Near-sighted Artist: "B'Jove, there's a glorious subject! Just wait till I sketch it—a beautiful amber and gold sunset with a white cloud slowly moving to the right. If I could get that on canvas as it should be, it would be worth a fortune." Farmer's Boy: "What yer talkin' about? That's my red-headed sister settin' over there on a rock and the cloud is the old white horse a-eatin' grass."

REDUCING THE SURPLUS.—"Great Jerusalem, wife, this package of notes is £50 short," said an opulent politician, in hair raising accents the other morning. "Don't get excited, my dear; that's all right. I took it to buy Julia a sealskin jacket," replied his wife, serenely. "The dence you did! and without saying a word to me. What do you mean?" "I am living up to your political faith, my dear. I heard you tell a political friend last week, in tones that shook the rafters, that a surplus in the treasury was an outrage, a curse, and a temptation to reckless extravagance, and that it should be reduced at all hazards. Now, I don't propose to have our domestic peace blasted by a plethora of treasure, so I went to your safe yesterday and reduced the surplus to the extent of £50. Wasn't it a wise political policy?"

THE EYES OF THE PICTURE

By the Author of "For Silk Attire," etc., etc.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Violet Marsden, stung to the quick by the neglect of the man who calls himself her husband, and driven to desperation by his callous and inhuman treatment of her, in a fit of temporary madness would have made an end of her life by drowning. Seven years have gone by, and Violet Marsden, now known as Mrs. Herbert, has almost forgotten this unhappy episode. She is quite a favourite among certain artists, and at one of her "At Homes," Leigh Erlscourt is introduced to her. Mrs. Herbert recognises him as her preserver, and would like to tell him how she has blessed him a thousand times since that day. Leigh sees Mrs. Herbert frequently, and his friends and relations are curious of his interest in a woman whose past is shrouded in mystery. Mrs. Herbert visits Leigh's studio to look at a picture he is painting. It is that of the woman who would have destroyed herself but for his timely aid, and it is with difficulty Mrs. Herbert controls herself at this critical moment. Mrs. Chatterton, who is the soul of propriety, hears of her brother's infatuation for this "unknown woman," and earnestly remonstrates with him on his folly, but all to no purpose. Leigh does not realise it yet but he has met his fate, and if it is folly he must pay the price. Violet tries to prevent Leigh speaking the word which she is all the time longing to hear. But such whole-hearted devotion cannot be suppressed, and it is when he has declared his passion that Violet tells him of the dark page in her history. Henceforth Leigh has but one object, to discover, and if possible secure punishment to the man who has brought so much sorrow into his dear one's short life.

CHAPTER XXIV (Continued).

SO bound in fetters that he could not break, however tempted, he met Gilbert Venner the next night. It was as well he was not free—he knew that the minute he saw Venner. He did not join him then; he merely nodded to him across the room, and sat down to play with another man. He wanted to regain the self-command that had been momentarily shaken. It was not done in a minute; it was so hard to keep cool—so much harder for him than it would have been for others of a different temperament.

He noticed everything that night; his faculties seemed strained to their sharpest. George King came in. He seemed uneasy, looking about for someone; but he was short-sighted, and did not see directly the person he wanted. A few minutes afterwards Erlscourt noticed him talking to Venner. Venner laughed, and appeared to treat lightly the subject under discussion. They, both still talking, came towards where the painter sat. He heard George say, "Then you think I can go?" and Venner answered, "Why, of course, without a shadow of doubt." George then went out of the room.

Laughter and loud voices as usual filled the room; attendants went round noiselessly, supplying fresh cards and wine. The talk—by no means refined, and interlarded with many a perfectly unnecessary oath—Erlscourt heard without heeding it. His mind took in but what one man said—his eyes noted all he did. So that when Venner rose, and, after chatting for five minutes with another man, left the room, Erlscourt said at once to his companion, looking meanwhile at his watch:

"Would you mind letting our game wait awhile? I have an engagement, but I will be back as soon as I can."

"Certainly, with pleasure!" said the other, affably. "We can finish it later; we each know our hand."

But the game never was finished.

Erlscourt thanked him, and went out—not through the hall, but up the stairs, to the door of George King's private room. Whatever within him he was fighting down, whatever blanks stretching away before him he was trying to ignore, there was not much outwardly to show it, except unusual paleness, and a hard look in the eyes.

The hand he laid on the lock was perfectly

steady. As he went in, in obedience to Venner's "Come in," his voice was as clear as ever, perhaps a little lower; but that might have been from caution.

"There's that account of ours to settle, Venner," he said, with no conscious choice of the words as including a double meaning.

"Oh, ah!" said Venner, with affected carelessness, for he was never really careless about money. "You need not have troubled. But how did you know I was here? This is King's room!"

"Oh," said the other, significantly, "I know you've the free run of it."

"The devil you do!" said Venner, his uneasy laugh concealing but feebly the savagery in his tone. "My dear fellow, you know a great deal more than I do!"

"I think not," said Erlscourt, quietly counting out the amount of his debt in gold pieces. He had no intention of passing paper with Venner to-day. How could he tell what might happen? He wanted no trace that they had met.

He handed the money to Venner, waited till the latter had placed it in his purse, then, still standing by the table, said, in the same intensely-quiet way as before:

"Before I leave you I have something further to say."

Venner glanced at him suspiciously. He did not like the look of him. He had enough quickness—or fear—to see that the words meant something more than they seemed to.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, roughly. "You are using rather an odd tone, Erlscourt."

Erlscourt went on without noticing the interruption.

"What I have to say concerns a story you told me once, which you left unfinished. If you will answer truthfully the question I shall put to you, give me the proof of its truth that you have about you. I shall leave this room, and you will hear nothing more of me, nor will any claim be made in consequence of your answer."

Venner had gone livid, and his hand had been lifted half way to his breast-pocket, but dropped again as he recollected himself.

"What story, what question?" he said, angrily. "What the devil do you mean—threatening me, too—there was a threat in what you said!"

"I meant there to be!"

He moved a step nearer, still keeping both the door he had entered by and the little door on his left nearer to him than to Venner.

"Seven years ago you, not as Gilbert Venner, but as Edgar Marsden, went through a ceremony of marriage with the girl whose story you told me—Violet Herbert. Answer me, before Heaven, which was the lie—that marriage or your denial of it to her?"

For a second the two men faced each other in deadly silence. Venner had the horror of uncertainty as to the man he was dealing with, added to the bewilderment that staggered him.

Who was he, who had been his dupe all these weeks, who knew all the secrets of his black life, and dragged them to the front, while he flung a threat at him?

His stupid dupe, whom he had thought his companion in vice, standing there to champion the cause of a dead woman who had been wronged.

But he could throw his pitiful sneer at him, and he threw it, recovering his lost ground as well as he could.

"So you're a hypocrite, after all," he said, "trying to force me to tell you my affairs, coming here to worm yourself into my confidence night after night. My follies are

nothing to you, and the woman you talk of is dead—unless—ah!" he cried, forgetting himself in a sudden flash of conviction, "you painted that picture that has got her eyes—her haunting eyes! You know her—she has sent you! She is not dead! Go back to her—tell her—"

"Stay!" said Erlscourt, sternly. "Think well of the terms I offer before you utter another lie! Yes, I know her; but let her name alone if you care about your life. I know what you are here—not a member, but a part proprietor. I have but to give notice, and you are ruined."

"Further, I know that you cheat at play—that you have cheated me and others. I have but to say the word, and you are cast out from all society but that of blacklegs like yourself. So much I have found out here. If you deny my right to question you, you do it at your own cost. You yourself, having been my tool, have given me the means with which to make this demand. Now choose!"

He had curbed himself so far because he had promised; he had stooped to make terms, to parley, where he was burning to annihilate. But he had promised; and for that, and the memory of the eyes that had looked into his, and the lips that had kissed his, he held himself in check. He was watchful of Venner, and took from his breast, unnoticed, the tiny pistol.

"Hm!" sneered Venner, for he was not deficient in brute courage; he could defy if he was too prudent to attack. "I see it all. She always had a pretty face, and you want to get her for yourself. I didn't know you were so particular about other men's wives."

"Take care!" said the other, hoarsely. "You will not answer my question?"

"Show me your right to ask it," said Venner, with a laugh, but he retreated somewhat. "Marry her—you can't hurt her."

Erlscourt sprang forwards, blazing with passion, and flung himself on Venner so suddenly, with a blow so truly directed, so strong, that the man reeled, caught blindly at a chair near him, missed it, and crashed to the ground.

Before he could stir Erlscourt had one knee on his breast. The moment was worth a lifetime of agony. The wild, savage exultation sent the blood through his veins like fire. For the moment he was half mad. This dastard life at his feet, shrinking beneath the gleam of the pistol, he would end!

"Are you going to kill me?" whispered the writhing wretch, opening glazed eyes of terror. "Have you—have you no care for your own life?"

"None—no more than I have for yours. Dare to stir, to call out, and I shall shoot you. Give me that certificate you have!"

"I haven't—"

Erlscourt wrenched open Venner's coat and vest.

"Don't lie to me now," he said. "I care for nothing under Heaven but to crush you. Give me the paper!"

Venner, trembling and half stunned, slowly drew forth a folded paper. Erlscourt took it from him, opened it with one hand, keeping the pistol in its position with the other.

For a second the lines all waved up and down, he felt his heart growing cold, his eyes dim. Then two names grew out of the darkness—Edgar Henry Marsden, Violet Muriel Herbert; then a third, John Walsh.

"You told your wife," he said, and his eyes flashed as he uttered the word, "you told her this man was no priest. Who was he?"

Venner scowled without answering.

"Are you mad," said Erlscourt, bending over him, "to play with your life? I suppose you value it, such as it is. Answer at once!"

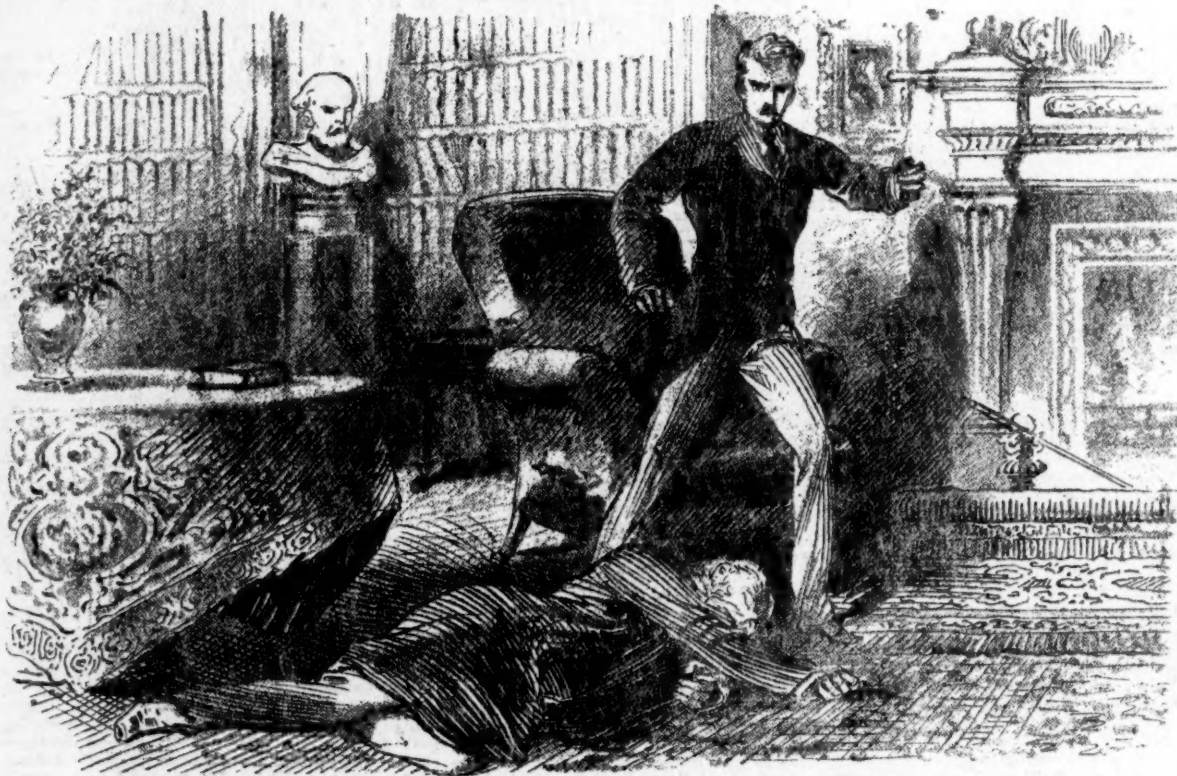
"He was a priest. He belonged to Sydney, Sussex. He was a friend of mine."

"No."

"Is he alive?"

"No."

"Go on," said Erlscourt, thrusting the



"THE RAID," ERLSCOURT SAID, SPRINGING TO HIS FEET, "I MUST NOT STAY HERE."

paper into his breast. "I have no time to lose."

"He had got into trouble—owed money. He was hiding at Penvalle—in that cottage. He was in my pay."

"Where did he come from—what living or curacy?"

"He'd a curacy at Wells, in Somerset—St. Frideswide."

If he suffered an agony, lying there helpless, with twenty people in the house, what did the man suffer who knelt beside him? A thousand things he could have said kept surging in his heart, but choked him as he tried to utter them.

What words ever framed by man could scathe and trample enough on this creature, who, like a reptile, had left his loathsome stain on a pure soul? What but his blood could really avenge one tear of Violet's, one cry for her lost honour, one bitter throb of shame? What but his blood? And yet he had promised. He could feel even in this maddened moment the soft lips on his, could see the tender eyes.

"Take your cursed life!" he broke out, suddenly. "Say what you will—of me; I shall know how to answer it. Don't lift a word against the woman who is your wife, whom you would have ruined if you had dared. You did your best. I set myself to wring the truth from you, to avenge her, and I have done it. You who thought me the fool were fooled at my will. You betrayed where you kept this paper, you betrayed where you had married the girl; but I wanted proof, and I have got it. Step by step I have traced it out and duped you. Coward! who laughed at an agony you could not fathom—who tried to crush the child you had betrayed, it is your turn now! I would to Heaven I had my own way. I would kill you!"

"Don't kill me!" Venner groaned, putting up his hands. "It is all dark. I am dying!"

Erlscourt, not heeding him, turned his head

towards the door. The noise and laughter he had heard faintly all the time had changed. There were strange sounds below—loud cries, shouts, turmoil, the rush of feet, the crash of breaking glass. He sprang up.

"The raid they promised!" he said, under his breath. "I must not stay here."

He looked down again at Venner. He lay still, with closed eyes, breathing with difficulty—this husband of Violet Herbert, whom once she had loved, once cared for, once clung to, once believed in as her hero.

With a shudder Erlscourt turned away, crossed to the small door, and listened again. Yes, he heard George King's voice—they were coming upstairs to this room. He threw open the door, passed through without another look, and shut it behind him gently. He was on a narrow landing, with a stairway going down. What if it led into the hall? No, it could not. He should have heard the noise more distinctly, whereas it was fainter.

Silently down the stairway into a little entry, from which a low window opened. Not a soul near. It was not fastened. He opened it, easily got out, and stood in a side street. It seemed empty, as if every soul had gone to swell the crowd before the club. He could hear the hum and inarticulate sounds as he stood with the cool night air blowing on him, and the scene in that upstairs room growing like a hideous dream.

His hand went to his breast, clasping the paper hidden there—clasping it as he went quickly through back streets to his hotel, until he reached his room, unobserved by any one. Once there he locked the door and flung himself on the couch, hiding his face.

CHAPTER XXV.

There was a rush, an onslaught, and the bluecoats and helmets filled the gorgeous room at King's. There was a perfect scare amongst the men assembled in quiet enjoyment—they

struggled to escape, leapt chairs, tables, fought at the door indiscriminately with friend or foe. Down went marble-topped tables, velvet chairs, ornaments, glasses, amidst the indescribable hubbub of such a scene. No one person seemed to be contributing to the noise, and yet it might have been known at Charing Cross that a raid was being made on King's Club.

Eagerly Hilliard, who was present, sought for Erlscourt or Greville. He could not, to his great relief, find either anywhere. The chief, after many had been arrested and marched off in official company, turned to Hilliard.

"Take a few men upstairs," he said; "there are club-rooms up there, and I don't see King. I am afraid somebody has given him the word, and he'll slip up."

A frightened waiter offered to show the way. Hilliard declined, with the information that he knew all the ins-and-outs, and, calling his men, went upstairs. No one was in the smoking-room; he went on to the private room, and opened the door. A man at the far end, lying in a heap on the floor, sat up, with bloodshot eyes fixed on the intruders, and hurled an oath at them with thick utterance. Then he staggered to his feet, away from side to side till he caught at the mantelpiece.

"I want you, Mr. Venner," said Hilliard, quietly. "I believe you're part proprietor with Mr. George King."

"He's drunk," said one of the policemen. "Take care, Hilliard; he looks dangerous."

"There's someone coming upstairs behind that door," said the other, and was stepping towards it when it was dashed open, and George King, breathless, broke in. He fell back as he saw the policemen. "Damnation!" he said. "too late!"

"I'm afraid you are, Mr. King," said Hilliard, politely. "Any little valuables you came to fetch must remain where they are."

"The devil they will, then!" said George,

and made a rush at a small cabinet near Venner. Hilliard sprang after him.

"Venner," cried King, too excited to notice Gilbert's condition, "we're a match for these d—d bobbies—bear a hand!"

Then there was a general *milfe*. Venner, too stupefied to know how incapable he was, joined in, dealing as many aimless blows at King as at the policemen. It must needs be a brief fight—one to three—for before a minute had passed Venner went down like a stone. Nobody noticed him—nobody knew how it happened. When guarded by the two policemen, and swearing enough to shock even them, King was forced downstairs. Hilliard saw Venner, and went to him. He bent over him, lifted his hand, which drooped heavily, then his head. He was perfectly insensible.

"Sign of a blow here," said Hilliard, supporting Venner's head, and pushing back the hair from the temple, where a dark bruise showed itself. "Drunk, eh? I don't think so, but I'm glad my men did. You were hurt before we came, and somebody—Heaven knows who in such a scrimmage—has just finished the job, and I'm afraid it is a finish," concluded Hilliard, rising as his chief came in.

Venner's was pronounced a hospital case, and Hilliard told off to attend to that part of the business. The streets around the club were, of course, full of a noisy, jeering crowd, gathered from all the purlieus of the neighbourhood—a crowd that delighted in the break-up of King's just because it was a break-up, and would have tried some looting of the valuables within had not the posse of policemen at the door been an impassable barrier to all such playful views of other men's goods.

When Venner had been carried into the hospital ward Hilliard waited while the house-surgeon applied restoratives and examined the wound.

"I should like to know what you think of him, sir," said Hilliard, "so that I can make my report."

"They are ugly hurts," said the surgeon, "but I don't think they will prove fatal. I should have no doubt at all if he had led a different sort of life to what he evidently has led. I shall be able to tell better in the morning, but he ought to do fairly."

Then he heard the explanation of the injury; but Hilliard said nothing about his opinion of Venner's previous condition. He placed a policeman on guard over his prisoner, and left the hospital to make his report. After that he was free for a while, and supposed to be resting; but instead he drew a paper from his pocket-book, read what looked like an address, and then walked quickly up to the Hotel.

The sleepy porter in the hall hardly heard his inquiry as to the way, but pointed vaguely in the right direction, and Hilliard went up.

It was now near three. Hilliard hesitated before he knocked, the room seemed so silent; but his tap had hardly sounded when he heard a step within. Then the door was unlocked and opened.

"It's all right, sir," said Hilliard, stepping in, and closing the door again. "You'll excuse my coming at this hour, I know."

"What's the matter?" asked Erlscourt, looking at him, forgetting to notice the apology.

"I got the day as near as I could," said Hilliard, lowering his voice; "but at the last minute it was changed—too late for me to let you know. I came up to tell you about it, sir."

"Yes," said Erlscourt. "Sit down, Hilliard."

He leant against the table, keeping himself half in shadow, out of the brilliant gaslight. Hilliard did not sit down—it went against his notions while his better stood (Hilliard being of that good stock that hasn't quite repudiated the word as it stands in the catechism). He was the more confirmed in the suspicion that had suggested his present action by the fact that Erlscourt seemed to have made no

attempt at rest. Hilliard also considered that the painter ought to have been surprised at seeing him, but he had not been.

"He's in the sort of state that ain't surprised at anything," thought the man. "At least, so I expect."

He told his story clearly. "King's taken, sir," he said. "I was right glad not to see you or Mr. Greville. Venner's taken, too, sir."

"Is he?" said Erlscourt, without a look or movement to betray himself. "You know, of course, that he and King ran the concern together. He is as liable as King."

"Mr. Venner showed a lot of fight," said Hilliard, "when King came in. King tried to get at some money—thought he and Mr. Venner would overpower us three, and he called on him to help. Mr. Venner seemed stupid; my mates said he was drunk."

"And you?" said Erlscourt, "did you think he was drunk?"

The man looked into the handsome face with that curious smile on the lip.

"No, sir," he answered, quietly, "if you want the truth, I didn't."

"What did you think, then?"

"I'd rather know nothing at all, sir, please. I came to tell you about Mr. Venner, because I thought you'd like to know for more than one reason."

Erlscourt gave a slight laugh.

"I thought as much. Well, I'll tell you nothing, and hold myself your debtor. What about Venner?"

"Why, sir, he went down in the scuffle. He was no sort of use, you know—and one of our fellows must have given him a stiff blow, or else he hit his head in falling. I found him insensible and took him to the hospital."

"I'm glad of it!" said Erlscourt, setting his teeth. "Now, Hilliard, I see what I was not quite sure of at first, that you've got a very good idea of what may have happened. If anything comes of it, for Heaven's sake speak as you think—as if I were a stranger. If you think it was not your man, but I who injured Venner, say so—no one shall lie to shield me!"

"Mr. Erlscourt, I don't want to know at all what you've done; but there isn't anything likely to come of it if the house-surgeon is right; and if there were, I believe the worst of his hurts is what my man gave him," said Hilliard, earnestly.

"I'm sorry for it," said the other, shortly.

There was a pause, while Erlscourt paced up and down silently.

He dared not think of Venner's death as probable. To dwell on the thought would be to wish for the fact, and his motives for the wish were now so inextricably confused as the grim truth that Violet was lost to him kept forcing its way into his consciousness by slow and awful steps, that he recoiled.

He came back to where Hilliard still stood, and said, abruptly:—

"You must let me know how he goes on. Hilliard, I shall not be here after to-day, but you know my address, and about nine this morning I shall be in Vane Street."

"I will do all I can," said Hilliard. "Good-night, sir!"

"Good-night; thanks!" said Erlscourt, with a grip of the man's hand.

Left alone, he threw himself down by the table, with his head on his arms.

There was enough of anguish in these weary hours to be remembered till the day he died.

He had better have died than sat there shaken, exhausted, tossed between the fierce joy of triumph and the fiercer pain of inexorable loss and of self-reproach; for he knew he ought to feel the joy he had felt, only it had been so dashed with a sense of misery.

He had gained a priceless treasure for his darling; he was to put it himself into the hands that had been so often stretched out to a Heaven that seemed not to see them.

He had kept his vow, he would receive his reward—her long night of shame removed.

That ought to be enough—it had seemed enough at times, but it was not now.

He had not thought of himself then, only of Violet. He had welcomed the test of his love—even parting had lost half its agony if Violet's fair name were restored.

But now the agony was upon him, now the parting must come, and he saw it all with other eyes—shrank from the sword that dealt the stab, cried out against it.

The temptation he had all along dreaded looked into his face in this supreme moment.

Six—seven—the hours dragged on. At half-past seven a servant knocked at the door, and delivered a note—it was from Hilliard.

"Going on well, Surgeon confident."

Was the reader glad—sorry? He was weary with conflict, weary of pain. He could not tell. What did it matter?

He burned the note. The time was growing near when he could go to fulfil the task he dreaded.

He was full of self-distrust—not able to form an idea what he should say or do to break his news to Violet.

He made some change in his dress, and went down to the coffee-room.

In order to as much as possible—having in view contingencies that might arise—act as on an ordinary occasion he ordered some breakfast, and a cab in ten minutes.

That the waiter, when he announced the cab, found nothing touched but some coffee did not matter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Violet Herbert was late that morning—she had had a bad night, and at eight o'clock was not quite dressed. She was weary and nervous this morning—dreading she knew not what, looking about in vain for a place whereon to rest her thoughts that should not be shadowed in gloom. Even Lucie's entrance—a matter of course—made her start. She smiled faintly as she saw the cup of tea on the salver Lucie carried.

"The very thing I want," she said. "I have not slept all night."

"I thought you'd like it, ma'am," said the girl in her respectfully affectionate way; but she was not judicious in adding before her mistress had done more than take up the cup, "Please ma'am, Mr. Erlscourt would like to see you."

Down went the cup—indeed Violet's shaking hand would not hold it with safety. Her face went white.

"Mr. Erlscourt!" she said, "at this time! There was no knock!"

"No, ma'am. I saw him from the dining-room window, and let him in before he could knock. He said he would like to see you at once."

Violet turned to the mirror and began hurriedly to fasten her dress, a white gown of soft material, that made her look fresher and sweeter than ever. She gave no thought at all to her looks—she was wondering, with a feeling of physical faintness, what had brought Erlscourt at such an unwelcome hour.

"You don't touch the tea, ma'am," said Lucie, taking the fastening of the dress into her own steady hands.

"I can't. Go and tell Mr. Erlscourt I'll be down directly. Take him into my sitting-room."

"I have taken him there, ma'am," said Lucie. She finished dressing her mistress and went out.

Mechanically Violet knelt down to utter if only one prayer before she left her room to begin the day. No daily prayer suited to ordinary trials and needs could she say.

She only looked up at the crucifix before her, with wide appealing eyes—the only words that would come to her mind were "Help me, help me!" and she did not know against what she needed help.

Then she rose, and stood for a minute transfixed. What did he want with her? He

would not have come to tell her that the gold ring she wore was a mockery—he would not force her to hear her shame in his presence; he would have told her that some other way.

The other thought, the alternative, she could not look at—not if she wanted to keep a shadow of control.

Outside the door of the room where Erlcourt awaited her, she hesitated. In that room she had told him in an agony of shame her miserable story—what was she to hear now?

Yet for all that, when she went in she was certainly the calmer of the two.

Erlcourt turned sharply from the other end of the room, and came to her. He looked stern and haggard, like a man who has suffered and suffers still, and is afraid to relax by so much as a hair's breadth.

And he seemed to hesitate in his greeting of her, to almost stoop to kiss her as usual, holding her hands with a grasp that quivered; but he did not kiss her.

Violet would have thought the greeting cold—unkissed him—if she had not seen in it another meaning. She never knew how she stood so quietly, till the tension was unbearable, and she drew hands away; never knew how she could say so calmly,—

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting."

She felt as if she were forced to take refuge in a commonplace, to be sure all the earth was not changed.

Erlcourt, face to face with her, face to face with the fate he had himself, as it were, carved out for himself, felt that the long vigil of last night had done nothing to prepare him for this task.

How often has a lover himself sought the means by which to put away the loved one from him!

Sweetest vision man had ever seen she looked to-day. He had thought his power of emotion was exhausted, but one look at this slight woman before him, looking up at him with pathetic eyes, roused it all again.

He did what he had never intended to do—said not a word, but put her marriage certificate in her hand, and turned away.

She stood looking—looking. Her heart felt as if it had ceased beating; life—her own and the life throbbing and sinning and suffering around her—needed to some limitless distance.

She did not yet see in her bewilderment that dared not give way to joy what honour would cost her. Nay, she was incredulous still that honour was hers. The very signature at the bottom might be false, and still make her an outcast.

"Leigh!" she said, in a sharp, strained voice, and looking at him with burning eyes, "this name, this priest's name—you have told me nothing."

There was impatient reproach in her tone; who could blame her? Not Erlcourt, though he felt it. He answered gently,—

"The man was a priest. When I leave you I shall go to get the proofs of it, to satisfy you to the utmost. You are Edgar Marsden's wife, neither Heaven nor man can undo it!"

"Edgar Marsden's wife!" she repeated. "His wife—oh, Heaven!"

Involuntarily he made a step nearer to her, involuntarily breathed her name.

"No—don't touch me," she said, putting out her hands as if to keep him back, and then suddenly threw herself on her knees by the couch with a smothered cry—that cry that is terrible because anguish must always have gone before.

And he, though the cry racked him, dared not go to her, touch her, speak to her. This half-unknown realm of a woman's soul was like sacred ground. The passion of love had no place in it—it was sanctified by a passion above and beyond love.

Who, indeed, could tell what passed in this pure soul that had been scared by the thought of dishonour? Did she know herself? Was not everything blotted out by the dazzling glory of her unsullied wifehood?

She sprang to her feet suddenly with a new terror.

"Where is he?" she said, rapidly. "Is he dead or living? Why did he acknowledge me—he will not claim me?"

"Claim you!" exclaimed Erlcourt, fiercely. "Claim you—while I live! Never, by Heaven!"

She shrank back with crimsoning cheek. Alas! consciousness had come to her. A wife—and this was her lover!

Erlcourt caught her hand.

"Violet, forgive me! I don't shrink from me! I have done what I promised. I have forced the cursed coward to tell me the truth, to give me that paper you hold, to give me names and places. I spared him because I had said to you I would, because you had asked it, because one word from you was dearer to me even than vengeance!"

"Leigh, I will not shrink from you. I will trust you still."

"Heaven keep you!" His lips pressed again and again the hand he had in his. "You ask where he is, in hospital. You start, Violet. I swear to you I was faithful!"

"I know! I know! But what does it all mean? I am in the dark."

"After I had got him down, after, with my pistol at his head, I had not got what I meant to have, I heard a rush and a noise downstairs. I thought directly what it was—the police raid. Hilliard had warned me of."

"Hilliard—he does not know?" said Violet, with again the hot colour rising. "You told me nothing!"

"Hilliard knows nothing for certain; and I purposely told you nothing until I had succeeded. I had just time to get away. Hilliard came to me afterwards, and told me that Venner and King had resisted, and that Venner seemed dazed and stupid—any work, with a flash of the dark eyes. "Somebody hit him, and he fell. They took him to hospital; he was hurt somehow."

"Is he dying?" she asked, with a sudden gleam in her eyes.

"No; I wish to Heaven he were!"

"And so do I!" said the wife, sternly. "I asked you to spare him, not because I cared for his life, but for your honour and mine. Do you think I care if some other hand but yours were to take his life? What do I owe him but a shattered girlhood and years of misery? Do I owe to him even my wifehood? Am I not his wife only because he dared not utterly deceive me?"

She walked away, up and down, up and down, her breath coming and going in gasps, heart and soul torn with the sense of her unpardonable wrongs.

"If he were dying," she broke out, "and crawled to my feet for forgiveness I would spurn him! I have been silent for years, till my heart was half broken. I must speak if it kills me. His wife! and he flung me out to die the death of an outcast!—and I might have been one, but for you!"

"Violet, hush!" said Erlcourt, half angrily in his desperate pain.

"It is true. Do you think I ever forget your face, your voice, your words? Do you think I ever forgot that you did not despise me, that you were kind to me? I told the chaplain that I should never try to take my life again, and he thought I had seen its sin. I was not good enough for that; it was because of you. I was half mad. I should have flung myself into any temptation that offered, but you saved me. You saved me a second time from my own despair; and now—now you bring me this priceless gift! I, who owe you life, owe you honour, too; and I can never repay you!"

She sank on the couch, covering her face.

"Violet," Erlcourt said, throwing himself at her feet, hardly knowing what he said, "we cannot part!"

"What!" lifting herself startled.

"No, no!" cried Erlcourt, flushing to his brow. "How could I hurt you who trust me? I would die before I uttered a word to wound you. But we cannot be as strangers!"

"Yes, we must," Violet interrupted. "Once

and for all let us understand it. I have been wrong from the beginning. I should never have let you love me. But I was weak—and you—well, you conquered then, but you must yield now—for my sake, for yours."

"I must see you sometimes—have some mercy!" he said. "You cannot send me quite away—your own heart will cry out against it. I must give you up—Heaven help me! I have no choice—don't make me desperate!"

Ay, he was right, as Violet acknowledged silently—her own heart was playing her traitor. She would have been wiser to be inflexible and she knew it; but she asked herself, dallying with the sweet temptation, could she not make that wifehood, of which she was so surpassingly jealous, her strength and his? Was there not a sublime strength of womanhood that could tread firmly on ground covered with a thousand snares, when it was needful? And it seemed needful here. She knew so well what desperation meant. Many a man had lost his hold on all good, as she had nearly done.

And he did not command—only pleaded with that chivalrous submission to her that he had always shown, and that she understood. Softly her fingers caressed the dark head bowed on her knee. How could she send him away who was dearer to her than ever? The tears, hot and heavy, gathered in her eyes, fell slowly, one by one.

"Leigh," she whispered, "I ought to be stronger, but I cannot be. Come again—once at least. Don't despise me because I yield even so much."

"Despise you, my saint!" he covered her hands with passionate kisses. "I will be content with what you give me."

Yes, content now, but would he not plead the next time for "once again?" Was she not spreading a tangle for their feet—yielding a little and making it impossible to resist hereafter? Even in her gladness at the reprieve there was a throb of doubt, of fear. She had been through the fires, and not even the love that was now so sinless could blind her from seeing that it might easily become sin.

And Erlcourt would as soon have dreamt an angel from Heaven could sin as his darling, in spite of what her own lips had confessed; and as little would he have dreamt of taking any advantage of the concession. There might be danger to himself, but, manlike, "he did not think," as children say.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Some days slipped by. Erlcourt was away in the country—Cambridge and Wells—trying to allay his fever and restlessness by active exertions for Violet. She, alone, could not realise that shame was not her portion, but realised too clearly that this once more she was to see Erlcourt must be the last time.

How little she foresaw what that interview would be.

Also alone, for his brutal ill-temper made him resist all kind overtures of doctors or nurses, Venner lay on his hospital bed, and cursed the man who had helped to lay him there.

He himself had been baffled—undone—a mere puppet. He was not repentant—not even remorseful, only savage that he had been such a fool, and given his friends the right to sneer at him.

But sometimes a dim sense of what he had missed in his life changed his coarse anger to the point of agony. Tossing from side to side he thought of those cool green lanes far away in the country, and the clear brown eyes that had looked up into his. And though he had cast her off, denied her, he grudged one look, one smile from those eyes to the man who was free to win them, while he himself lay here, a helpless log.

He said not a word of what had passed—not once did Erlcourt's name cross his lips; he would wait till he was strong, he thought, and then get his revenge where it would strike

home—through his wife. He had a whole-some fear of Erlscourt, a keen recollection of his feelings when that gleaming muzzle was within a fraction of an inch of him.

The doctor attending Venner said one day he did not get on as he ought to. The patient growled out it was nonsense, adding an oath.

The next day the doctor looked grave, and late in the afternoon another doctor accompanied him to Venner's bedside. Venner did not like this—it made him uneasy; and, besides, he felt so stupid sometimes, couldn't keep his thoughts together—kept going off into dreams of far off times, and trying to tear himself from them only plunged deeper into a darker dream.

Once he demanded angrily who was that woman standing there with haunting, accusing eyes? There was no one, the Sister said; but when he persisted, she humoured him and said it was one of the nurses.

"Tell her to get out, then!" he said; but the next minute he was complaining of the same thing. And that vision never left him.

Hilliard came and went; he sent no messages to Erlscourt, knowing he was out of London, and he had no orders to send any to Mrs. Herbert, though he half guessed she was the person chiefly concerned. He heard from the surgeon that complications had set in quite unexpectedly, and due to the dissolute life, it was plain, Venner had led.

He did not say much, and went about his business elsewhere. He had much to do with the King's Club case, which had come before the magistrate, and was in all the papers. Bail had been refused for George King; the club-house stood empty, with vacant windows staring into the street, the debris of furniture and broken glass still lying in the card-room; while an idle group, never lessening in numbers though changing its units, was always to be found standing gazing at the desolate building, and being continually ordered to move on by the policeman at the door.

Emily Challoner expressed in, for her, unmeasured terms her delight at the break-up of the club. For some days she scanned the papers anxiously to see if her brother's name was dragged in, and pestered her husband with questions as to the probable chances for and against.

A hundred times her patient husband made the same answer—that plainly Leigh was not there at the time of the raid, and though his name might be mentioned, he could not be implicated.

Dora, too, plied Greville with questions which he could not answer, knowing nothing. As for Tom Danvers, he came in for a severe lecture from his irate paternal, accompanied with sundry warnings, which rather cowed the young man.

The matter formed a frequent subject of conversation in the Hamilton Terrace circle. Emily was not very pleased at Leigh's abrupt departure from London, and that she might not miss seeing him when he returned postponed her own annual holiday-making.

But these innocent folk knew nothing of the darker lines of the picture they saw. Greville, of course, did not come under the category of innocent folk, and began to see what Erlscourt had been contemplating when he asked for his assistance.

Challoner still lacked a clue to what he still thought odd conduct of his brother's, but quite made up his mind that Leigh had discreetly retired into the country till the fuss about King's had blown over.

And one day, when Hilliard came to the hospital, the surgeon said to him:

"I don't think your prisoner will go before the magistrate."

The man could not help a start.

"Is he worse, sir?" he asked.

"He won't recover," said the surgeon. "He might have if he had been in all things a temperate man. I can't say how long he will last."

"It's an awful end, sir," said Hilliard, who was not, naturally, easily shocked. He seemed shocked now. He was to hear as soon as Erlscourt returned to London—meanwhile his news must wait. And Venner's revenge, too, must wait.

If she had known, Violet Herbert need not have wrung her hands in anguish—if he had known Erlscourt need not have been glad that he had no time for grief.

They told Venner at the hospital that they could not save him. He said it was a lie—they were cheating him, and swore. It was that woman with the brown eyes ever there that told them to say it. Why hadn't he let her alone? She must be dead to haunt him like that, and then he talked of play. He had done him finely, he said, never uttering a name—he would do him further yet, when he got out of this hole—he shouldn't have her.

But he might struggle, he might hope for life—death came slowly on notwithstanding. He only reaped as he had sowed.

The fatal lethargy compassed him round about. Already he was past physical pain—already they thought him shut out from the world. But how did they know, how do we ever know, whether the soul is not keenly awake though the body is almost dead? How could they know that he saw his life as a drowning man sees it—saw all the sweet places he had passed by, and suffered as he had made to suffer?

Once more Erlscourt and Violet met in that favourite room of hers. She was very quiet, trying to brace herself up for the inevitable conflict, but she did not miss a word of what he was telling her.

It had been easy to trace the priest John Walsh at Cambridge, and from Cambridge to Wells. He had not borne a good character—had been some time at Wells, but finally left deeply in debt—indeed, had hidden himself in the little Welsh village of Penalva.

At Penalva Erlscourt had been able to hear more of him. He had left the village after the marriage, but had come back ill and gone to the little inn, kept now by the son of the then landlord.

This man had given every facility to Erlscourt. He remembered the clergyman coming there; he had dined there; believed there were some effects of his about now. Might he see them? Erlscourt had asked, with some hope of finding a record of the marriage. The landlord had willingly agreed.

The gentleman, he said, died rather suddenly at the end. They didn't know where to send his things, and so kept them, not quite liking to destroy them in case any one should turn up. He always said he'd no belongings. He'd been writing when he was taken. So chattering, the man gave Erlscourt a few papers and letters, mostly unimportant.

Almost at the end of his search he came upon an envelope containing a letter to the priest himself. On the back was written a brief account of the writer's status and of the strange marriage he had performed.

This paper, soiled, crumpled, Erlscourt now placed in Violet's hand. There could not now be a shadow of doubt.

It was evening when they met. Erlscourt sat near a table, leaning his face on his hand, Violet by him, holding that message from the dead in her hand. It was just that time of the twilight when darkness falls like a shadow one could touch—a palpable something dropping down over the lingering light. There was that peculiar stillness of twilight, too. You might almost have heard the breathing of those two—the man waiting, the woman seeking wildly for words that would not come.

Neither heard a tap at the door—neither stirred till Lucie's voice said:

"May I come in, ma'am? I've a note for Mr. Erlscourt."

Violet lifted her head—Erlscourt sprang up.

"Who brought it, Lucie?" he said, taking the note.

"Walter, sir—Hilliard, I mean. He's below."

"I'll send—let him wait," said Erlscourt. Lucie retired.

He went to the window to catch the fading light. Violet had risen, and came also to the window—stirred, she knew not why.

"What is it?" she said, with beating heart. He did not answer—did not hear her; for this was what he read—dated from his own house:—

"Got your telegram announcing arrival. Came here and found you out—your man told me where. Mr. Venner has been sinking last two days—died last night."

Died last night! Erlscourt clenched the paper slowly in his hand, and, looking up, met Violet's eyes.

"What is it?" she said, fearfully. "Why do you look so?"

He only muttered something indistinct, suffered her to take rather than gave her the note, and sank down by the table.

He could almost hear the pulse of the minutes as they passed. "Died last night!" they said—that was all he heard or felt.

And this was to have been their parting! The utter solemnity of the thought and of that awful death was overwhelming. Violet rallied from it first, but her voice was not above a whisper.

"Leigh, I am going to the hospital."

Erlscourt raised himself, looked at her as if he did not understand her, then stretched out his hand. She, taking it half blindly, fell on her knees beside him.

Even in the few short minutes before they moved it had grown quite dark. Violet went to the bell and rang it.

"Violet," said Erlscourt, following her, "you must not go. There is no need; you are not fit for it; and you must not be mixed up with the matter at all."

"I am going," she said, resolutely. "I must see him myself; no one knows him as well as I. Perhaps I am not fit, but I am going, Lucie," as the maid entered, "my hat, a cloak, and a thick veil." Then to Erlscourt, "Hilliard is waiting; go to him. I am coming."

When she went down there was already a cab at the door.

She found that Hilliard had gone on to the hospital, and would await her there, as being better able to pass her in.

Only once, when they were near their destination, and the lamplight flashed on the white face beside him, did Erlscourt make another effort.

"Violet, for my sake, go back; you will break down!" he said.

She shook her head, struggled to speak, and then whispered back:

"I can bear it—if you will not speak to me."

Five minutes afterwards she was following Hilliard through the hospital corridors, dimly lighted and quiet. She felt as if she were walking through some dream.

The attendant presently opened a door, and stood back.

"I will wait for you here, ma'am," said Hilliard, with deep respect in tone and manner. Nothing could make him think any wrong of the lady who was so kind to Lucie.

The attendant preceded her, and, pausing by a pallet, laid back the coverlet; then he retired to a distance.

She stood at last, after seven years, face to face with her husband, only his eyes were hidden.

She almost felt herself as if her life had gone out of her.

Not the face she had seen last—the mysterious change to youth had passed over him

as it does over most, smoothed and softened and etherealised.

The wife, dry-eyed, stood like a statue.

What was she thinking of? Of the old days in the fresh country? Of her wrongs? No; she simply saw the dead form, with eyes sealed and lips silent—eyes that never would open, lips that never would move. The mystery of Death wrapped all her spirit; she had no sense of much else.

A slight movement from the attendant warned her that the time was up.

Outside the door her terrible quietness went. Trembling, she clung to Hilliard's arm. He was glad to hurry her out of the hospital, back to where the cab still stood, and Erls-court paced up and down like a sentinel.

He half lifted her in, paused to say a few words to faithful Hilliard, then followed Violet.

The fixed look on her face changed as he took his place beside her, but she did not give way—she had learned in too hard a school for that; only, as she felt his arm about her, she clung to the sheltering embrace.

He would have given the world to see tears; she half frightened him.

Near home he bent down to say:

"I can't leave you so, dearest!"

Perhaps the soft tone tried her too much. A dry sob seemed to hold her speechless. Then she sat up.

"I am not ill," she said, steadily; "please let me be alone."

He yielded; he saw it was best. He could trust Lucie to take as much practical care as was possible. Anything more would only break Violet down; and, though he might think that would be better for her, he knew also that there are times when we do not want even our best loved.

Lucie promised him to take especial care of her mistress, and so far he was satisfied.

(To be concluded next week.)

Reflections

The brilliance of one mind is a public square deluged with electric light; of another a tea-perfumed parlour lit by wax candles.

Only the well-fed discriminate. The domestic mouse has a more sophisticated face than the field mouse, but a starving cat never found that out.

The green mind, like the green field, has more things growing in it than you would suspect.

If you would enjoy your infatuation, never scrutinise it.

The woman who takes in washing to support nine children is cheerful, but so few of us can be a washerwoman with nine children!

Pygmalion turned a marble woman into a loving wife simply by loving her. Nearly every man has had a similar experience.

Love and pain are twins that nearly every woman has nursed.

When for a moment I am privileged to see myself as others see me I am astonished at the size of my smallest fault.

The woman who dreads the commonplace may be sure that her sufferings, at least, will be uncommon.

The diamond star in a young girl's delicate hair is less brilliant than her fancies about life.

A woman's gravity and brightness should be like the dusk and gleam of a June shower—no chill in either.

There is a type of man who thinks he can make a girl believe anything if he puts on a sincere look when saying it.

The young girl counts the minutes till her lover comes; the old maid counts the years since he went away.

Life grows richer as it grows old. The setting sun reddens the stream of wine.

We wouldn't object to time's flying if he didn't insist on dragging us along with him.

The most obvious fact of human life is its unutterable pathos.

Coronation Notes

In all ages the crowning of a king has been looked upon as one of the most sacred of religious rites, says a writer in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. It is a compact between the sovereign and his people, solemnly engaged in the face of Almighty God. The king is anointed with sacred oil, crowned, and takes the Holy Sacrament in view of his people. Although monarchs have broken the pledges then given, the glamour of the rite has never diminished, and a coronation is still looked upon as a solemn act symbolical of the unity of the British Empire. Never before, however, has the supreme prelate of the Church of England placed upon the head of a monarch a crown so weighty with the jewels of Empire and so fraught with meaning. Not Alexander, not Caesar, not Napoleon, ever acquired by mighty conquest an empire comparable to that which British statesmen and the British people built up piece by piece during the sixty-three years between the coronation of Queen Victoria and her death.

For a thousand years British sovereigns have been crowned, but never before has a coronation been watched with so profound an interest in so many lands. That the crown of England should contain among its jewels the ruby won by the Black Prince at Cressy; that the sword, Custana, may have been borne by Edward the Confessor; that the golden collar of the Garter worn by King Edward VII. should have been the property of Queen Elizabeth, are all facts supremely gratifying to our people, and they are visible, comprehensible links in the chain of British history.

After an interval of well-nigh two hundred and fifty years, King Edward proposes to revive the ancient custom of a ride through the Metropolis, accompanied by the Princes of the Royal House and the representatives of foreign nations, and of the armed forces of the Crown. In former times the route was from the Tower to Westminster, the King sleeping at the Tower on the eve of the day appointed for the procession, owing to having no residence in London.

There are still living persons who remember as spectators the Coronations of King George IV., King William IV., and Queen Victoria. The first was a supreme effort at splendour; the second was a compromise between ambition and parsimony; the third—well, it was worthy of the illustrious lady it concerned. The gaudiest coronation in its middle-age splendour was that of hapless Richard II., and the expense for the epoch was so great that it practically cost the monarch his life.

King George IV. wished his coronation to descend into the history of Europe in a series of commemorative memorials. It is said that he spent hours with his friends in scheming out his own vestments, and when at last he accomplished his purpose in a sublimated dream, he had the costly fabrics placed upon the person of a menial, who strutted before the delighted sovereign, so that he might see himself as others would see him. The experiment proved satisfactory to the King, and the poor flunky had only the sweet memory of vain regrets to reconcile him to the shedding of so much finery for ever. These cast-off coronation vestments are still to be seen in a chamber over the House of Commons.

The coronation of William IV. just escaped the stigma of shabbiness. It was the economy of the age that prevented His Majesty from giving the usual Coronation feast in Westminster Hall. So the peers got over the difficulty of their monarch's retrenchment by dining one another.

It is estimated that the Coronation of George IV. cost £200,000, while that of William, his successor, cost but £80,000. But George was just magnificent, splendid, glorious!

Women Who Teach Royalty.

The governesses to the Queen of Holland and the King of Spain were English ladies. This is proof that English women are well to the fore in the race for success. Thousands of women have been successful owing to being strengthened and made fit for their daily work by Bile Beans for biliousness. Mrs. Gertrude Morley, of Crown Street, Apsworth, near Ilkeston, began to be troubled by anæmia when eighteen years of age. The anæmia became chronic, and lasted for four years. Sleep afforded her no benefit. She always felt tired and weary, as though she would like to lie down and not get up any more. She had also a swelling across the stomach, and suffered most severely from constipation. She lost all relish for food, as well as the ability to digest it. One day her husband bought a box of Bile Beans. His wife took them regularly, and before the box was finished felt a great improvement in her condition. She continued with the Beans, taking them regularly, and her improvement became more rapid. The distressing constipation left her; once more she felt a desire for food, and found herself capable both of enjoying and digesting it. She is now completely cured, and recommends Bile Beans whenever she hears of a person suffering from anæmia and debility. Bile Beans for biliousness are a certain cure for indigestion, anæmia, constipation, debility, pimples, skin eruptions, palpitation, headache, liver and kidney disorders, nervousness, all female ailments. All chemists stock Bile Beans, or they may be had, post-free, from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119, London Wall, London, E.C., on receipt of one and three-halfpence, or two and nine. Housewives and governesses have by them been benefited alike.

CARE OF THE HAIR

The hair needs plenty of pure air and sunshine, and more particularly should the air circulate freely at the roots. In the early morning let the hair hang down over the shoulders without let or hindrance, and if only just for one hour the result will invariably prove beneficial, particularly if that time be spent in the open air, such as in the garden or on a balcony. Whenever the weather permits, brush the hair near an open window. If to effect an artistic coiffure it is necessary to tie the hair with ribbons or braids, do not tie so tightly as to interfere with the free circulation of the sap. And do not overload the hair with hairpins, combs, and frizzettes so as to cause that numb, sore feeling of the scalp—a sensation which for "sweet vanity's sake" most women have at various times suffered.

IF IN LOVE ASK AN X-RAY

O great and wonderful X-ray!
You are the marvel of the day!
There's naught your penetrating eye
May not discover—by and by
(If all that's said of you be true.)
But there's one thing, if you could do,
Would win the heart of one sad lover.
Dear Ray, wise Ray, can you discover
If in the heart of sweet Priscilla
The love with which I try to fill her
Hath therein taken solid root
For the swift prospering of my suit?
Or—with the art of coquetry—
Doth she but make a goose of me?
In other words, prove, if you can
'Tis I, and not some other man,
Who lingers in the hidden shrine
Of that sweet heart I want for mine.
And if that fact you can discover
You'll make a friend of every lover.

EDEN'S SACRIFICE

CHAPTER I.

SHE was behind the laburnum hedge. Her eyes had caught the gleam of the sunshine, her lips and cheeks were the shade of the sweetbrier that bloomed behind her.

She was peeping through the parted growth at a man on the other side, her features drawn into a smile that brought out every sweet, coquettish dimple in the lovely olive face, every gleam, from black to amber, in the dancing eyes.

Her wealth of hair was pushed back from a low, broad brow, but escaped her sun-bat in little, rebellious, clustering curls; her gown, open at the neck, exposed a firm, round throat, with the flush of health peeping through the olive skin.

Everybody admitted that Eden Carleton was lovely; the poor idolised her. But there were those who shook their heads sadly when her name was mentioned.

Old Mrs. Griffiths expressed the opinion of the neighbourhood when she said to her daughter:—

"Yes, I grant you Eden is beautiful, generous, and high of soul, but she is too much indulged, too capricious, too wilful. She invariably acts first, and thinks afterwards. Her impulsiveness is going to lead her into an act of folly some day that will ruin her life."

If Mrs. Griffiths' words were to prove prophetic, there could never be anything more sad, for Helen of Troy was not more beautiful, nor Cleopatra more alluring than this girl, while an odour of such childlike innocence and faith played about her that the very atmosphere she breathed seemed cleansed of impurities.

She stood as we first see her, gazing upon a man who was approaching—a man as worthy of description as herself.

He wore a suit of immaculately white flannel, and carried himself with an indolent, high-bred elegance that was intensely attractive, his six feet of height worn with the grace of a gentleman athlete.

His eyes were of a dreamy brown, with a flash of fire that showed him to be possessed of a temper, governable only from long experience.

A long, silken moustache swept a mouth of peculiar beauty and firmness, while the poise of a noble head was perhaps the most artistic effect in the person of Bertram—shortened to Bertie.

Eden shrank back as he reached the gate in the hedge, fondly believing that she was out of the range of his vision, but he passed through the gate, and joined her with the utmost sang froid.

"You will be as dark of complexion as Margaret if you stand in that sun much longer, Eden," he said, coolly.

"Who gave you permission to call me Eden, Mr. Staunton?" she asked, saucily. "One would think I had known you at least three weeks."

"Instead of exactly ten days," he said, with a brief but musical laugh. "Ah, well! I'm going away to-morrow, and you'll let me be happy for this one day, will you not?"

"To-morrow?"

She forgot his question in wondering what she would do with her life after that eventful to-morrow.

The smile faded from her mouth, and a little pathetic quiver touched her lips, but Bertie Staunton, though he saw, was by no means content.

It was the child's grief for the loss of a toy, not the woman's sorrow at a parting from love.

"Yes, to-morrow," he repeated. "Come out of this heat, under the shelter of the oak over there, and let me tell you about it."

She followed him obediently, all the ex-

quisite dimples gone; but, before the shade had been reached, her insouciance had returned.

She threw herself down among the daisies and buttercups, flung her hat aside, and raised her eyes to his face, not tearfully, but with a certain daring.

"I shall miss you, Sir Knight!" she exclaimed. "Why did you not tell me that you were going before?"

"I didn't know it myself," he answered, stretching his long, graceful legs across the grass indolently, as he half reclined at her side. "It was one of those beastly telegrams that always interrupt a fellow in the midst of his vacation. Shall you be sorry to have me go, Eden?"

"I? Oh, yes, of course! You are much more agreeable than Joe Brown, or even Don."

"The compliment is not portentous when one considers that Joe Brown is a half-idiotic ploughboy, and Don a half-bred cur. Eden, how old are you?"

"Seventeen, Mr. Impertinence."

"And such a child! I never knew a girl so young for her years. I wonder if you would know what I mean if I told you that I love you?"

"Do you think everybody in this neighbourhood has the same affliction as Joe Brown? Don't imagine, pray, that I have passed my life without love. Everyone loves me. Mr. Fenton and—"

"Mr. Fenton is the parson."

"And Malcolm!"

"Malcolm is your brother."

"What of that? He can love me just the same, can't he?"

"Not as I do," answered Staunton, raising his eyes to hers with that passionate fire that every woman understands instinctively.

"There is just the same difference between the love your brother gives you and that I give as there is between moonlight and the glow of that hot sun! I adore you! Nothing can suggest words for its expression! It is the love that makes life without its object a misery, and death the presence of a god! Eden, could you ever care for me?"

She laughed nervously; and, breaking a daisy from the stem, held it up.

"This shall tell you," she said, lightly, beginning to pull away the petals. "*Elle m'aime*—"

"Don't!" he interrupted, taking the maimed flower forcibly from her hand. "It feels as though you were playing with the nerves of my heart. Answer me, Eden, do you love me?"

His earnestness drove out her lightness, as a cloud obstructs the sun.

She frowned slightly, and looked away from him, then replied:

"I don't know. I like your voice, and the touch of your hand. I am proud of your magnificent manhood. I like to watch you. You see, I am not such a child as you believed. I like to feel my power over you, for you do love me, Bertie!"

It was the first time she had ever called him that, and a flash of colour swept over his face, leaving him paler than before.

He drew himself a little nearer her, and, turning in his reclining position, put both arms about her waist, unrepulsed.

"I never expected so much," he said, allowing his passion expression in eyes and voice as he had never done before. "You do love me. I can read it in every wave of colour in your cheeks, I can feel it in every thrilling fibre of your being. My darling!"

She held him from her, both small, pink palms upon his breast, and smiled, but there was something delirious in it more encouraging than her words.

"I am not quite sure," she said. "I confess that you fascinate, you magnetise me, but is that love?"

"It will be in time. Eden, I am to return to London to-morrow. Come with me as my wife."

"Are you mad?" she cried, almost indignantly. "Ten days ago you were an absolute stranger to me. I met you in the woods and liked you because you were trying to set a rabbit's broken leg instead of killing it as most men would have done. That rabbit was my introduction to you, but you had not as acquaintance in the entire community. My brother is away. He will undoubtedly disapprove of my friendship with you. What would he say were I to do this outrageous thing as you suggest?"

"He would be angry at first and forgive you later. Because he is your only surviving relative does not make you belong to him. Do you think your disapproval would make him decline to marry a woman?"

"I am quite sure of it. Malcolm and I are all alone in the world, and we love each other as no brother and sister ever did before. He would never marry unless I consented—never! Why, it would break my heart if he married a woman I did not know. No! If you love me you must wait or come again, Bertie, when Malcolm is here. You must tell him who you are, for we are very proud, Malcolm and I, and our family dates back to the time when Egbert the Saxon was made first Sovereign of all England in 827 A.D. Our ancestors have all married their equals in point of birth, and Malcolm says we must never disgrace their example. There has never been one of them who could compare with you, Bertie, in personality; but you must have Malcolm's consent before I can become your wife, as he must have mine before he can take a wife."

Bertie had dropped his head and was pulling negligently at the grass that grew in such luxuriance about him. His face was flushed, his hand unsteady, his eyes downcast.

Eden laid her hand upon his black hair lightly.

"Have I offended you, Bertie?" she asked, gently. "I have not a doubt but that your birth is as good or better than my own. Your breeding I know to be perfect, and your manner such only as a gentleman could possess."

He raised his head, his lips twitching slightly.

"I would give my soul to win you, Eden," he said, passionately. "to make you love me in the same masterful way that I love you."

Her lips trembled at his earnestness, and she was about to reply with some degree of warmth, when she saw Margaret, her maid, approaching. They moved further apart and waited.

"It's a telegram, Miss Eden," the maid said, delivering it and departing.

Eden tore open the envelope and threw it carelessly on the ground beside her, then unfolded the pink paper.

She read it aloud:

"To Miss Eden Carleton, Oak Vale.
"I was married this morning. Forgive me, and expect letter announcing date of our return to-morrow." MALCOLM.

White and cold the unhappy girl sat holding the luckless paper in her hand, her heart rigid with bitterness.

Understanding it, Staunton's arm went about her; his hand passed with tenderness over her still, set face.

"You must not grieve so, my darling!" he murmured, gently. "You don't know why he has done it yet."

The words aroused her, and pushing him from her, she struggled to her feet.

"He has broken faith with me—the faith of my whole life—and he tells me of it in that heartless way through a telegram!" she cried, in a quivering voice. "He has broken my heart. Bertie, you said you were going to London to-morrow, and asked me to go with you. I called you mad then, but now I ask

your pardon. I will go with you as your wife, if you will have me."

He remembered her impulsive nature. He knew that she spoke from a bruised heart; and he recollected other things—things in his own life that he knew must come to her knowledge sooner or later.

All that was best and noblest in him pleaded for a refusal of her offer; but with those sweet, grieved eyes upon him, loving her with all the passion of a mad heart, he would have been more than human had he not yielded to the cry of nature.

He put out his arms and drew her to him in insatiable ecstasy.

CHAPTER II.

Eden was like one of Rembrandt's or Gainsborough's old masterpieces in her grey travelling dress and broad hat to match, with its drooping feathers. A broad belt of chased silver drew the artistic gown in at the slender waist, and a single pearl droid it at the throat.

She was drawing on her long grey gloves as Staunton entered. His eyes flashed over her, taking in every symmetrical line of her perfect form, every curve in her lovely face.

She lifted her great eyes, in which there was no welcome, only passionate anger.

He had meant to tell her the truth—to make her acquainted with the facts of his life, and then entreat her to be his wife in face of all; but her first words routed his courage.

"At least you have not failed me, Bertie," she said. "See how I have trusted you, in that I am ready to follow where you lead?"

"You do trust me then, sweetheart?" he asked, placing his arm about her and bending his handsome head to kiss her.

"You are all that is left me!"

"And you love me?"

She drew away, not impatiently.

"That will come by-and-by. My heart is too sore now to think of love. There is but one thing—if you ever deceive me I shall despise you. There," as he was about to speak, "don't promise. Another did, and he broke his word. Oh, Bertie, I trusted and loved him so! I—"

The sweet voice quivered and broke. A mist of tears gathered before the dark eyes, but were angrily dashed aside.

"The trap is at the door, is it not?" she asked, haughtily. "The train will be due by the time we reach the station."

He bowed silently and offered his arm.

Margaret was ascending to her room when Eden reached the hall.

"I will not be at home to-night nor to-morrow, Margaret," she said. "Have the east wing put in thorough order for your master and his wife."

"His—"

"His wife, I said!" interrupted Eden, coldly. "I don't know exactly what day they will arrive, but you are to expect them at any time. Tell Mrs. Wilson, please. And, Margaret, you may pack my boxes, and have them ready when I send."

"But, Miss Eden—"

"That is all. Good-bye!"

It was not Eden's nature to be cold and unkind. On the contrary, she was warm-hearted and impulsive. But her brother's act had frozen her.

She felt that he had wronged her. She had worshipped him, and they had made a solemn pledge to each other never to marry without the other's consent.

She had never broken her word in her life; never deceived anyone by even so much as a look, and that he should do so was a terrible grief to her—not a grief that agonises, but one that angers—that makes one long for some revenge.

She followed Staunton to the dog-cart, forgetting to observe, as she had always done before, how graceful he was, and how perfectly his tweed travelling suit fitted his lithe form.

He handed her into the dog-cart, took the reins, and drove silently to the station.

In five minutes afterwards they were on their way to London.

Staunton was preoccupied, not himself, though he was the personification of courtesy to his companion, while she sat nursing her anger against her brother.

The truth that "two wrongs cannot make a right" never occurred to her; nor the fact that she was marrying Staunton because she was displeased with her brother.

Pride was the fault of her race; and that was her inheritance.

When they arrived in London Staunton gave the coachman an order which took them to a clergyman of his acquaintance.

The carriage door closed upon them, and Eden leaned wearily back upon the cushions.

Staunton watched the pale face a moment in silence; then he took her hand reverently.

"Eden," he said, tenderly, "are you quite sure you do not regret? Remember, dear, this is not for a week nor a month, but for ever. Do you think you will ever love me? I don't wish to fret you now with unnecessary conversation, but your whole future happiness depends upon this."

"You need not be afraid to trust your name and honour to me, Bertie," she answered, gently.

His face flushed hotly. Some words were upon his lips, but he choked them back and forced himself to speak calmly.

"It is neither of my name nor honour that I was thinking," he replied, "but of you. Life contains so many rough places, Eden, that you know nothing of, and it requires a great love to bridge them securely. If I knew that it would ever come—if I felt that by serving patiently for years I might win that which I know you are capable of giving—I would be content."

"It is too late to reconsider now, Bertie."

He shrank back as though she had struck him, and did not speak again until the clergyman had entered the room.

When the witnesses had taken their places she stood beside him and listened to the words that bound her life to his for ever.

Until it was all done, and the words: "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder" had been uttered, she seemed to be dazed, incapable of connected thought.

But as she raised her eyes to her husband's face a paralysing thought came to her:

"Who is he? May not he be an adventurer? I do not even know his name to be what he says. Great heavens! what have I done?"

The terrible fear came upon her so strongly that she staggered, and would have fallen, but that Staunton's quick arm caught and supported her.

"What is it?" he asked, tenderly. "Are you ill?"

The sound of the unsonorous, aristocratic voice reassured her; the strong touch of the long patrician fingers strengthened her.

She smiled vaguely.

"A sudden giddiness," she answered. "It is over now."

Then she signed the name of Eden Carleton for the last time, and an Irish servant-woman who had witnessed the ceremony, whispered to another:

"Carleton and Staunton. By the holy Virgin, it's a bad sign! Sure now, they used to say 'a change of name and not of letter is a change for the worse and not the better.'"

The words reached Eden, and she shivered, ashamed of her superstition and weakness a moment afterwards.

Still that vague, shadowy presentiment would return again and again. She tried to fight it from her, but it came again with persistent force.

They were driven to a first-rate hotel, and given a handsome suite of rooms.

Left alone Staunton knelt by her side and clasped her waist with his arm.

"Eden," he said, almost tenderly, "you are my wife. Are you glad or sorry?"

With an impulse, as much compassion as love, she leaned towards him and pressed her lips to his.

It was the first voluntary caress she had given him, and his expression of mad delight touched her.

"I am afraid I have been thoughtless of your happiness, Bertie, but it will be different after awhile. You have been very good, and I ungrateful; but, oh, Bertie! I have been so hurt, so bitterly wounded, because of his deception."

She threw her arms about his neck, laid her head upon his bosom, and wept like a child.

Tenderly, caressingly, Staunton soothed her, and gradually beguiled her to think and talk of other things.

He tried to put his heart into the effort, but a coldness was upon him that startled himself. He loved her wildly, insanely, but there was a something that arose like a spectre between them. Was it fear?

"You are tired," he said at last. "You look more beautiful in your fatigue than in your buoyant health, my Eden. You are perfect alike in form, feature and name. You would never allow me to compliment you before; but I can now, because you are mine; fancy that, Eden—mine! I love the very sound of your quaint name, my darling!"

"I love it, too, because it was my mother's. You have never told me your mother's name, Bertie. What was it?"

He arose suddenly from his knees beside her and walked to the other end of the room. His voice had a curious, suppressed sound when he answered:—

"Her name was Inez, but I never knew her."

"She is dead, then?"

"Yes."

"And your father?"

"He is—dead also!"

Great drops of perspiration stood upon the man's brow. His eyes were agonised.

Eden went up to him, and lifting her beautiful arms, placed them about his neck.

"I did not know," she said, gently. "Forgive me. I have been selfishly thoughtless; but I am glad to be your wife, Bertie, because I love you."

"You—love me, Eden?"

His voice was hoarse with a passion that half-an-hour before she could not have understood.

"With all my heart," she answered, unsteadily.

"I can scarcely believe it!" he cried, catching her closer to him. "Oh, my wife, my darling, if—"

"Hush!" she whispered. "I want to feel your love while you do not speak. I want your heart to tell mine of your truth and your nobility. Listen, Bertie, and forgive me. For one moment I was mad enough to doubt you—to wonder if you are, what you seem. I

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think the very insanity of the doubt showed me how I love you."

He crushed her to him that she might not see his face, and the language of his soul was—

"She shall not know! She shall not! Heaven help me! How can I preserve the secret that must be kept now?"

CHAPTER III.

Very nearly a week had passed—a week of happiness to Mrs. Bertram Staunton, who, in her own joy, had partially forgiven her brother his fault—a week of delicious content to the young husband, who lived in the present, banishing fear for the future as one shuts his eyes to the breakers ahead and waits, not knowing but that some fate will deliver him from death.

How devoted, how tender, how true he was! He watched over her with the love of a mother guarding her first-born.

He hung upon her words; he lived upon her caresses; he shivered with dread if she left him but a moment.

And she?

He grew in that week to be the nucleus of her existence.

She told him a thousand times a day that she wondered how she had ever lived without him.

And as he watched her love growing hour by hour, he became, instead of more confident, believing that her love could endure any test, morbidly afraid of any blow to it.

To a looker-on, watching the scene understandingly, it was intensely pathetic.

His very soul hung upon his ability to keep his secret, while Eden saw nothing but the love she had won.

Its vast depth and breadth never startled her; it was too delicately, too tenderly shown. She would have trusted him with her life, as she had trusted him with her heart.

When she remembered her silly fears upon her wedding-night she did so with shame, and she was doubly tender to him afterwards.

But the blow fell all too soon—the crushing slaughter of a life.

They were walking through the hall of the hotel one day, arm-in-arm, like two merry children, when Eden saw coming towards her a man and woman, the man familiar of form and face.

After a second glance she broke away from her husband, and rushing forward, pitched herself upon his breast.

"Oh! Malcolm!" she cried. "How glad—how very glad I am!"

"Eden! and here!" he gasped. "My dear, I don't understand."

"Of course you don't. I've been a silly girl, but I'm a very happy one. You took your wife into your own hands, and I followed your example. This is my sister, I am sure" (kissing her affectionately). "Malcolm is so surprised that he won't introduce us, but we shan't mind that, shall we? Malcolm, let me introduce my husband, Mr. Staunton. Mrs. Carleton, Mr. Staunton."

If Eden had been preparing a sensation for weeks she could have planned nothing better.

Malcolm, believing his sister to be safely at Oak Vale, was confounded, but Bertie Staunton saw nothing of that. He touched his brother-in-law's hand, as courtesy demanded, but his eyes were fixed with burning horror upon the beautiful *debonair* blonde face beside him, and she was regarding him with what might be called interested impertinence.

Her cool eyes were fixed upon him with disdainful calm, while the fire in his glowed brilliantly for a moment, then went out.

But Eden had seen.

She was startled, but held her peace, inviting her brother and his wife to her rooms.

"Will you explain this most extraordinary situation to me?" Malcolm asked.

She complied, and they had their mutual words of forgiveness and congratulation.

Then Carleton looked at his watch.

"I am late already for an appointment,"

he said, rising. "Shall we dine together at six?"

"With pleasure," Staunton answered.

Then kissing his sister and wife, and shaking hands with Bertha, Malcolm went.

"I must leave you also," Bertha Carleton exclaimed, rising indolently when he had gone. "I am a slave to an afternoon nap. Until dinner then, Eden, *au revoir*! I am quite sure we shall become great friends, Mr. Staunton!"

She bowed over so slightly, her beautiful gold hair glittering in the sunlight.

"You must call my husband Bertie," laughed Eden. "It sounds so absurd and formal of you to say Mr. Staunton."

"Then, if I may"—with a curious smile upon her crimson lips—"Bertie. It has rather a familiar sound."

She smiled mockingly, and left them.

For a moment Eden stood looking at the closed door through which she had disappeared, then turned, with a little frown, to her husband.

"What do you think of her, Bertie?" she asked.

"She is beautiful," he answered, constrainedly.

"Do you know I fancied that you and she had met before. Have you?"

A brief pause; then:

"No!"

For the first time she doubted his word.

He leant over and kissed her.

"I am going out upon business for half-an-hour, dear," he said. "Shall you be lonely?"

"I shall have my memory of you," she answered.

He took her in his arms and kissed her with a passion that he had never equalled before.

"My pure one—my wife!" he murmured, and left her.

A sense of oppression was upon her, a heaviness that weighted her like some frightful incubus. She went into her bed-chamber and

threw herself upon a couch. She was vaguely disappointed, overshadowed by a coming fatality.

The couch upon which she had thrown herself was pushed against a door leading to another suite of rooms, and scarcely had her head touched the pillow than she became conscious of hearing the tones of her husband's voice in the adjoining room.

She started up involuntarily, and, without thought of wrong, listened.

"I have come to you for an explanation of your presence here as Malcolm Carleton's wife!"

That was what he said, and Eden's lips grew white; her hands clasped themselves upon her chest convulsively, her breath came in quivering, jagged gasps as he waited for the answer.

It came after a little rippling, scornful, mocking laugh, which Eden recognised as belonging to her brother's wife.

"I thought you would come," Bertha replied, in a cool voice. "You see I waited for you. I have power even to draw you from your new toy, Bertie."

"Silence!" he commanded, sternly. "Don't dare allow your foul lips to breathe a thought of so pure a thing as my wife!"

"Your what?"

"My wife!" firmly.

Again that scornful laugh rang out, turning Eden's blood to ice.

"We will drop that subject, if you please," continued Staunton, coldly. "I have come to ask you if Malcolm Carleton knows your private history?"

"My dear Bertie, how absurd you are! Of course he does not. Do you suppose that little pale-haired aristocrat would have married me had he known?"

"Most decidedly I do not, and for that reason I am here. You must tell him."

"Are you mad? Do you think that I would give up the life of respectability, not to speak

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of affluence, that opens before me, for a whim of yours? How little you know me after all, Bertie!"

"But I tell you that Malcolm Carleton must know from either you or me."

"Do you mean to threaten?"

"A man of honour never threatens. I simply warn you."

"You have become very virtuous within the past three weeks," she sneered. "Let me ask you—have you told my handsome sister-in-law that your mother was the notorious Inez Rawlins, whose beautiful face adorns the rogues' gallery, and whose history is a disgrace to humanity? Have you told her that you have no knowledge of who your father was? Have you—"

"One word more, and I shall forget that you are a woman and strangle you!" cried Staunton, hoarsely, his eyes ablaze with rage. "I forbid you ever to speak one word of that to my wife or her brother. You shall not pollute her purity with the knowledge of that villainess, nor by an association with a woman such as you. The world knows you. You cannot conceal your shame even if I were to remain silent, which I shall not do."

Bertie Carleton straightened herself, and looked into the antagonistic eyes defiantly.

"I remember you well, Bertie, as the firmest man I ever knew," she said, slowly. "Perhaps that was why I loved you so insanely in those dear old wicked days that you seem to have forgotten."

"Listen to me, Bertie. I love you as well now as I did then, even though you have abandoned me. I am going to put two alternatives before you, and if you will think, you will remember that I can be even more obstinate than you. You wish me to leave Malcolm Carleton. Very well; I will go, and never see him again, upon one condition. It is that you go with me. Another opportunity that I offer you is silence for silence."

"There is no reason why you should rob me of the position I have won if you do not want me for yourself."

"In the event of your refusing both of these, there is another open to you. It is this: Do you forget, Bertie Staunton, that I, and not that baby whom I met to-day, am your wife, and that by your second marriage you have committed bigamy? If you take respectability and wealth from me, and if you decline to give me the protection of your love in exchange—well, as well the penitentiary as anything else. You understand me now, I hope? Do what you threaten, and I shall have you arrested and imprisoned for bigamy within twenty-four hours."

"That I shall suffer with you will be a consolation to me, rather than anything to deter. You see, I am neither excited nor angry. I simply mean what I say. I shall be grateful for your answer."

If Eden had but waited to hear it, this history of suffering might never have been written; but she did not.

In a wild excess of anguish she leaped to her feet and fled—fled as far as she could from the sound of the voices.

Then, crouching upon the floor, she remained there, like some dumb animal striving to hide from a pursuing misery.

The words that Bertie Staunton spoke were uttered firmly.

"I have listened to you," he said, slowly, "in order to answer any of your mistakes that I so well remember you are liable to make. I do not even speak to you bitterly, Bertie, because I despise you too thoroughly."

"There was a time, in my innocent youth, when, deceived by your infernal artifices, I believed I loved you, and like an honourable man, I asked you to be my wife. We went through with a mockery of a marriage, after which I learned your character all too soon. You did not care to conceal your baseness, your treachery, your love of gold then."

"I grew to hate you, to know that my feeling for you at best had never been anything

more than the infatuation of a boy, and I loathed myself for my own insanity. Then one day the knowledge came to me of your former marriage to Rupert Howard. Ah, you start!"

"He is dead!" hoarsely.

"Oh, no! He lives, and you know it. You were never divorced from him, and consequently I was never married to you at all by anyone in the universe."

"Eden Carleton is my wife—the only one I have ever had. That in my boyish days I should have been duped by an adventuress, and that I should have failed to tell my wife of that unhappy episode, are my only faults. Whatever my parents may have been I am innocent, thank Heaven!—and neither you nor any other living being can say to the contrary."

"You see I have nothing whatever to fear from you, and I warn you now that I shall tell Malcolm Carleton your history to-night if you have not forestalled me. That is all. Good afternoon!"

He bowed with profound ceremony, and left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

The noise of the closing door aroused Eden. An expression resembling death, and an agonising death, was upon her face.

She heard her husband's light, elastic step in the hall, and flying to her door, turned the key, then leaned against the wall breathlessly waiting.

He passed on in silence.

As the step died away her temporary strength deserted her, and she sank again upon the floor inert, almost senseless.

The objects in the room swam before her; a glare like that from a conflagration enveloped her surroundings.

For a moment she seemed on the point of fainting; then she pulled herself up by a mighty effort. Her hands were pressed upon

her temples, as though to hold thought together.

Sensation seemed dead for the moment; then all the old pride of race surged into her heart, while beneath it the mad idolatry, the passionate anger at her husband, were her strongest emotions.

She had heard none of his words in his own defence, and she saw before her only—dishonour.

"What am I to do?" she gasped. "What? what? Can I let the world know my shame and Malcolm's? No, no! Can I allow him whom I have worshipped to become an inmate of a prison? Oh, Heaven, no!" with a horrible shiver. "If I could only think—only think!"

She beat her hands together, her great wild eyes travelling about the room vaguely, as though in the hope of finding some escape from her terrible dilemma.

"I see—I see!" she cried at last, staggering to her feet, and leaning against the wall for support. "Malcolm and Bertie must be saved at whatever cost to me. But for me, no one need ever know but just themselves. It was all the result of anger and pique on my part. I will pay for it with—death. Oh, Heaven! life was so sweet this morning—so bitter, so bitter now!"

Vaguely she wondered at herself that she did not weep. She had always done so in her little trials; but this—it was too deep for tears.

Her soul was frozen, her heart lead, and yet the frightful pain pierced her like mortal wounds. There was no outcry. The white, set face showed an awful, immutable determination that was pitiful. So young, so lovely, so hopeless!

"It is my honour that I save," she murmured, over and over again. "My honour and Malcolm's. My father would have wished it so. He said so often, 'better death than dishonour'; and now the time has come for me

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to choose. Father, mother, plead with Heaven to forgive me!"

She sank forward upon her knees, her head upon a chair, and tried to pray, but the words stuck fast in her throat; an awful trembling seized her that she had not power to control.

She threw up her head with a wild desire for air. Her thoughts were becoming confused. Her senses reeled, not through approaching unconsciousness, but it seemed to be an incipient madness that was surging through her brain.

A lurid smile dawned upon her lips that never reached her eyes. She was but a child, accustomed to act from impulse, and her heart was breaking.

She had never worshipped her husband so as in that hour, but she could not understand what the feeling was. Love had never been expressed in gnawing pain to her before.

The smile grew, and a low, hoarse laugh issued from the parted lips. It was gruesome, hideous.

Upon a chair beside her was Bertie's smoking-gown, that he had thrown carelessly aside. Her wild eyes fell upon it, and she lifted it in her hands, the laugh that started even her coming again.

"How handsome you looked in that, Bertie!" she muttered. "I told you that you looked like a dissolute young god, and you did. I wish I had seen you in it last. I—"

Her voice failed, and a long, quivering sigh swelled up through her heart.

The unsteadiness in her brain became greater. She forgot whether the coat belonged to Bertie or Malcolm, and in turning over to ascertain a picture fell from the pocket. She looked downwards, and the features of her brother's wife stared at her, piercing her hot eyeballs like a dagger.

She dropped the coat and smothered the cry of her helpless soul; then she staggered to a table and wrote upon a slip of paper:

"You will find my body in the river if you care to look; but I should prefer that you allow me to find rest for ever there. I trust you to save my honour and my brother's."

"EDEN."

She left the picture and the coat where they had fallen, and pinned a hat upon her head, then looked about her.

Everything cried out of Bertie. A half-smoked cigar was upon the table, his shaving-cup and brush upon the bureau, a discarded pair of gloves were upon the chiffonier, but her eyes wandered from all these to the photograph upon the floor, and she turned away without a shudder.

She was like one dead to emotion. The knowledge of a frightful pain in her heart reached her through the cloud upon her brain.

She tried to remember what had happened to her, but the clarity was without form. There was but one word that clung to her with hideous pertinacity—death!

She unlocked the door and passed into the hall. She felt as if she were walking in a circle, and was giddy, in consequence, as a child is from turning round too often.

Then she heard the light swinging step that she had learned to love and know so well.

She drew back into an alcove of the hall, and watched Bertie as he passed her.

She watched him a moment hungrily, then turned and fled through the hall, down the marble stairs, and out into the crowded, bustling, busy street.

Her white, drawn face and haggard eyes attracted many, as she hurried by them, and more than one whispered to a companion,—

"That beautiful girl is either mad or soon will be."

But she neither heard nor saw them. Swiftly she moved along, her feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground, but borne upon the bosom of her own wild sorrow.

Down the Strand, along Fleet Street she went, seeing nothing, feeling little, save an insatiable longing for peace; into the City, and onward, unconscious of fatigue, and at

last reached that portion of the river where the great steamships are moored.

There were rough men upon every side, but they had their work to do, and there was less attention bestowed upon her than in the fashionable hotel.

Night shadows were beginning to lengthen objects, and the monotonous waves lashed the wharves with a slow, despairing sound that cut through the soul.

Eden walked out upon the end of a river steamboat pier, and stood gazing about her.

She neither trembled nor hesitated from any fear. She had forgotten fear, forgotten life, forgotten suffering, forgotten all but death.

She strove to think, but her mind seemed as far away as the horizon that she could see, but could not touch.

It was a singular sensation, but one which all who have suffered from mental anguish can readily understand.

The end of the pier upon which she stood became shrouded in gloom. She could hear, unconsciously, the voices of the men at the other end, the lapping of the waves, the puffing of steam through pipes, an occasional shrill whistle.

Eden lifted her eyes to the vault above her, but it contained no meaning. Neither cry nor prayer arose to her lips; her brain was as blank as though it had never existed.

She lifted the skirt of her pretty, tangle-coloured gown, and, as quietly as she had come there, she stepped from the pier downward into space.

CHAPTER V.

As Eden stepped quickly and lightly from the end of the pier toward the dark, shadowed water of the river, a strong, determined arm was thrown about her, and drew her safely back upon the planks.

But the mental strain had been too much for the overwrought nervous system of the girl, who sank inert and senseless in the arms of her preserver.

The man realised what had occurred, and lifting her in his arms, carried her carefully to the street.

Under the gaslight he presented an attractive appearance. Whilst not handsome, there was a high-bred, aristocratic expression in his face, a military bearing, a calm dignity of manner that bespoke the gentleman and the thoroughbred.

There was in the general appearance of the man a something that generated and diffused trust, and a commanding personality that neither man nor woman questioned.

With the light burden still clasped in his arms he paused as he reached the street.

"Can you get me a cab, my friend?" he asked of a man in labouring-dress. "This lady is ill."

Seeing the prospect of a large "tip," the labourer touched his hat and started off on a trot, returning in a few minutes with a rattling four-wheeler, drawn by a jaded horse.

But Eden's friend was in no questioning humour. He placed his burden on the back seat of the carriage; slipped some silver into the labourer's hand, took his seat beside the unconscious form, after having given some directions to the driver, and closed himself in.

The lumbering conveyance started, and Eden was again alone with the preserver of her unfortunate life.

He removed her hat, and with a stroke as gentle as a woman's touch he brushed the clustering curls from brow and temples.

"Poor little creature!" he murmured with genuine pity. "She is scarcely more than a child, and yet suffering has brought her to this desperation. Heigho! the world is filled with these unfortunates, and yet I can never lose my sympathy. We know neither the temptation nor the suffering that led to it. Heaven help them!"

He fell into a reverie, still smoothing the broad, fair brow as he might have done that of

a baby, and was aroused only by the stopping of the carriage before an imposing residence.

Again lifting the light form in his arms, he carried her up the steps, and let himself in with a latch-key.

A warm flood of rose-hued light filled the elegant hall, and lingered affectionately upon the small, pale, upturned face.

Without a pause, the gentleman entered the library, laid his burden carefully upon a handsome couch, and rang a bell.

A servant who had grown old in the service of his family answered.

"Is my mother here, Johnson?"

"No, Mr. Walter, she ain't." She didn't expect you, and she went out, taking Miss Sylvia with her.

"Is Mrs. Winter here?"

"No, sir, she ain't, neither—nor yet Betty, the housemaid. Mrs. Marchmont gave them permission to go out, and—"

"Never mind! Bring me some brandy and ice-water. There is a lady here who is ill. Make haste!"

Too wise to question, Johnson hastened to obey, while Walter Marchmont in his gentle, tender way proceeded to render his still unconscious guest as comfortable as possible.

He dismissed the servant when he had taken the brandy and water, then forced a few drops down the throat of his little patient, watching the effect curiously.

The magnificent dark eyes were not long in opening. The swoon had saved Eden Stanton's reason, as Walter Marchmont's prompt action had saved her life.

Her eyes wandered vacantly and incomprehensively about the large, luxuriously furnished room, and at last rested upon the interested face of her preserver.

She looked straight into his eyes for a few moments in silence, seeming to endeavour to understand why he was there; then, unable to solve the problem, she half lifted herself upon her elbow.

"Who are you? and where am I?" she asked, her sweet, musical voice falling softly in the vaulted chamber.

"I am Walter Marchmont, and you are with friends," he answered, a smile warm as sunshine lighting his intellectual face.

"I don't remember you," returned Eden, sinking back upon her pillows. "Where did I ever see you before? Where is—"

She broke off.

An expression of horrible remembrance crossed her face, and with a terrible shiver she sprang to her feet.

The look of puzzled childhood had vanished, and in its place was the reflection of a woman's most hideous suffering.

"How came I here?" she gasped, hoarsely, clasping her hands tightly. "Oh, Father in Heaven, how is it that I am not dead?"

Quietly but firmly Walter Marchmont caught her hands in his, and gently pushed her back upon the sofa.

Then, still holding her, he leaned toward her, and in a cool, soothing tone spoke to her, calmly:—

"You are exciting yourself foolishly and uselessly. Listen to me! I saw you as you were passing up and down the wharf, and the gruesome expression of your face frightened me. It was too white and set for your years. Besides, that was no place for a pretty, unprotected girl at that hour. I followed you. Now you understand. I beg you to believe that I have not tried to force myself in any way into your confidence; nor do I seek it now. But if there is any way in which I can serve you you may command me."

With a timidity that gradually grew to trust Eden looked into the strong, kindly face. Then, with a gesture expressive of great weariness, but some resignation, she spoke.

"I can't thank you," she said, unsteadily. "Perhaps I don't just appreciate the fact of your having saved my life yet. Some day I may; but that I cannot quite see the wisdom or kindness of it now, you will understand."

am absolutely alone in the world, utterly friendless, penniless, helpless."

"But—" interrupted Walter Marchmont, looking questioningly at her rich dress.

She understood, but there was not even a flush upon her face as she answered:—

"I lost my last relative to-day—my brother!"

A passion of tears filled the dark eyes and choked the sweet voice.

She half arose, then sank back upon the couch again, burying her face in the pillows, sobbing bitterly.

Walter Marchmont was deeply moved.

With utmost respect, but obeying an impulse that he had no power to control, he put out his hand and laid it almost reverently upon her bowed head.

"Poor little girl!" he said, gently, his voice very low and almost tremulous. "I wish you knew how genuinely sorry I am for you. But you must not consider yourself so entirely friendless. The world isn't such a hard place, after all, except to those who wilfully make it so. I understand your suffering. You are but a child, too young to fight life alone; but there is one thing that you have entirely forgotten—to trust that Heaven that has promised to be a friend to the friendless. Are you listening to me, dear?"

The pretty head was lifted, the tears brushed aside, and a trembling that was terrible shook the little frame.

"I cannot listen!" she exclaimed, miserably. "I can hear nothing but the voice that tells me that in all this great, bleak world I am alone—alone! You cannot know the meaning of that word to a helpless, ignorant girl. It is vacuity. About me there is wealth, happiness and love, but none of it is for me. Every unfortunate, miserable wretch upon earth seems to have someone belonging to him, someone to cling to, but me. I have done no wrong, and yet my suffering is greater than I can bear! Oh, Heaven, have pity upon me!"

The pretty, round arms were thrown up despairingly, and Eden's relaxed form would have slipped from the couch to the floor but that Marchmont caught and placed her again upon the couch.

"You must calm yourself," he said, tenderly. "I know perfectly well that you are in no mood to listen to platitudes, and I will spare you all I can. But you are not so alone as you seem to think. If you will accept my honest friendship, my earnest desire to help you in every way that lies in my power, it is yours. I would like you to trust me if you can. You are in the home made sacred by the presence of my mother.

"A few weeks ago my sister and her husband were killed in a railway disaster, leaving to our care their one child, Sylvia Fane. She is but five years of age, and my mother is too old to take charge of her as she requires.

"Will you remain here as Sylvia's governess? Your duties will be light, so that you need not fear them; but you would confer a great favour upon both my mother and myself if you will consent. We go to our country home to-morrow, and the assurance that you will accompany us would be a tremendous relief to both. Will you come?"

Something of Eden's natural energy had returned to her. She sat up and brushed the rebellious curls from her eyes.

"Surely," she cried, gratefully. "Heaven has sent you! I—I will try to repay your generosity; I—"

She put out her hand impulsively, and again tears choked her utterance.

Marchmont took the tiny hand between his palms and pressed it gently; then, to calm her emotion, spoke in a brisk, businesslike way.

"Before we conclude our contract, you must tell me your name."

Eden started.

She realised fully that for Malcolm and Ber-

tie's sake her identity must remain absolutely concealed; she must be as dead to the past as though her body were really concealed in the river as she intended it should have been.

After a momentary hesitation, she answered, slowly:

"Eden Chasemore."

"It suits you," returned Marchmont, looking unsteadily into the face whose exquisite beauty had matured with suffering.

He did not understand it then, but a wave of the influence she was to have upon his life swept over him with a saddening effect. With clairvoyant perception he saw the blank cloud in the future, but he could not read the letters in crimson that spelled—"Tragedy!"

(To be continued next week.)

Gems

HASTY judgment of the actions of others is dangerous and often unjust. We measure too much by superficial appearance, and condemn hastily when, if we knew all and understood the motives and reasons, we should warmly approve.

HE best loves his country who desires for her the most precious of all possessions, justice, honour, equity and charity, who will not countenance oppression in any form, nor give his influence in favour of national pride, or vengeance; or persecution, or outrage within or without her borders.

As we advance from youth to middle age a new field of action opens and a different character is required. The flow of gay impetuous spirits begins to subside; life gradually assumes a graver cast, the mind a more sedate and thoughtful turn. The attention is transferred from pleasure to interest—that is, to pleasure diffused over a wider extent and measured by a larger scale.

THE habit of letting every foolish or uncharitable thought, as it arises, find words, has a great deal to do with much evil in the world. Check the habit of uttering the words, and gradually you will find that you check the habit of thought, too. A resolution always to turn to some distinctly good thought when a complaining or unkind one arises in the mind is a great help—as it is to turn every thought condemnatory of our neighbour into a prayer for him. We never can long continue to dislike people for whom we pray.

SHAKING HANDS

There is an art in shaking hands
Not everybody understands;
And as they go through life untaught,
The simple act expresses naught.

The fingers limp within our own
Awaken no responsive tone
From the electric wires, that send
The hearty greeting to a friend.

But, oh, there is a simple touch,
Gentle and soft, that means so much;
The pulses of our soul are stirred,
As of we heard the spoken word.

The outstretched hand, the hearty grasp,
The fingers locked in loving clasp,
Fresh strength and courage have bestowed
To many a one along life's road.

Some lonely traveller it may be,
Yearning for love and sympathy,
And quick the sign to comprehend—
"My heart is true; and I'm your friend!"

Thus one repels—another draws;
And many are misjudged because
Not one in twenty understands
The gracious art of shaking hands.

Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.

All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

M. W.—Rusty nail water is said to be good for freckles; try it.

LIL.—An engagement ring is usually placed on the third finger of the right hand.

AMANDA.—Nineteen would be the preferable age to get engaged, twenty-one to marry.

FRYLLIS.—Neither of you seem to have done anything which is necessarily a barrier to your future friendship. Such misunderstandings and temporary fits of indignation as you describe are constantly occurring among young people, and should not be taken too seriously to heart by any of them.

HARRY.—The powder for which I give the formula is very agreeable and highly esteemed by smokers troubled with an unpleasant breath:—Cuttlefish bone, 3 ounces; prepared chalk, 3 ounces; burnt hartshorn, 2 ounces; myrrh, 2 ounces; orrisroot, 2 ounces. Mix and strain.

F. G.—I would recommend for you a camphorated bath. It is tonic and refreshing, and is prepared by dropping slowly into warm water sufficient of the following lotion to make the water milky and fragrant:—Tincture of camphor, 1 ounce; tincture of benzoin, 1 ounce; cologne, 2 ounces.

ROSIE.—The following is considered one of the best salves for the lips:—Spermaceti ointment, one ounce; balsam of Peru, fifteen grains; alkanet root, fifteen grains; oil of cloves, five drops. Digest the alkanet in the ointment at gentle heat, until the latter is a deep rose colour, then pass through a coarse strainer. When slightly cooled, stir in the balsam; give a few moments to settle, then pour off the clear portion and add the oil of cloves.

RUTH.—I give you a recipe for a lotion which is especially adapted to oily skins. Add a teaspoonful to a basin of water in which the face is to be washed:—Tincture of benzoin, 1 ounce; tincture of musk, 2 drachms; tincture of ambergris, 4 drachms; rectified spirits, 5 ounces; orange-flower water, 1½ pints. Add the tincture to the spirits, then mingle with the perfumed water. It is cooling and refreshing to the skin, acting as a tonic. If the ingredients are fresh and pure the result will be a milky emulsion.

BACHELOR MAID.—Wat Tyler was a rough-and-ready reformer, it is true, but he was unquestionably murdered by Lord Mayor Walworth, who was a man of no very high character. The rebellion took place in 1381, and was really a rising of the "villeins," who were in about the same condition as the serfs of Russia prior to their emancipation.

SCHOLAR.—A nautical mile is called a knot from the method in which a vessel's speed is calculated by the log-line, which has knots at certain distances, the number of which run off from the reel in half a minute shows the number of miles the vessel sails in an hour. A statute mile is 5,280 ft.; a nautical mile is 6,080 ft., being one-sixtieth of a degree of the earth's equator.

SMOKER.—It is clear from your statement that the irregular pulsations of your heart is due to excessive smoking. Ten cigars a day are about eight too many. Renounce the habit for a month, and if this abstinence does not give you early relief, a medical practitioner should be consulted. Your system must be saturated with nicotine after having excessively smoked for so many years.

ALEXINA.—I give you the recipe for an excellent pomatum, which will stimulate the growth of the hair with speedy results:—White vaseline, 3 ounces; cold-drawn castor oil, 1½ ounce; galic acid, 13.4 drachm; oil of lavender, 30 drops.

MIRIAM.—It depends upon his tastes; if he smokes, a cigar-case would be appropriate; if not, silk handkerchief, pair of slippers, or books, or a ring, or studs, or sleeve-links. By exercising a little thought you can easily find out which he would prefer. Perhaps he would prize a photograph of yourself above everything.

MARRIANE.—This is a question which you must determine for yourself. Perfect truth and candour should, however, impel you to tell your present suitor what you have told me, so that he may know the exact state of the case. Considerable delay in the matter would not be apt to do you any harm, in any event, notwithstanding the young man's impatience.

MILDRED.—A person with light blue eyes, fair complexion, and dark brown hair, most resembles a blonde, but cannot be termed either a blonde or a brunette, and would probably come under the category of persons who are said to be "between colours." A blonde is a person of very fair complexion, with fair hair and eyes, while a brunette has dark hair, eyes, and complexion.

HANNAH.—A red nose is sometimes the result of alcoholic stimulants, but it is more often caused by a derangement of the liver, occasioned by over-feeding, indulging in rich and stimulating foods, or too free use of condiments. When the floridity arises from either of these causes, the remedy is apparent; avoid rich diet, eat less meat, and shun condiments. Tea, coffee, and all alcoholic beverages should also be abstained from, and let your chief beverage be warm milk.

GRACE.—It is very unmannerly to lean back in one's chair at table, with hands in pockets. But there is nothing unmannerly in eating as much bread and butter as one desires. Your theory that "bread should only be used as an absorbent of fatty substances, and an accompaniment to the dinner" is an arbitrary one, and has nothing to do with etiquette or good manners. The same may be said of your other question. You seem to be animated by a pecuniary view of the subject rather than by considerations of etiquette.

Mrs. L. R. (Burnley).—When the hair first falls out, leaving bald spots, use this lotion:—Tincture of cantharides, one ounce; rectified spirits, one pint; reublimed sulphur, one ounce; glycerine, eight ounces. Brush the spots three times daily with a baby brush for five minutes, and wet with the lotion, letting it dry in. Every night bathe the spots gently with warm water and dry. Do not rub with the towel, but massage very gently with the finger tips. When young hairs begin to grow, change the foregoing lotion for the following:—Violet ammonia, half an ounce; rectified spirits, half a pint; sublimed sulphur, quarter of an ounce; tincture of cantharides, half an ounce; glycerine, two ounces; phosphate of lime, quarter of an ounce; tincture of cinchona, half an ounce. Should this produce irritation, reduce with the same bulk of glycerine and water.

DOROTHEA.—If you love the little man, marry him. Dr. Watts, you know, says that "The mind's the standard of the man."

L. How.—The word carat, as applied to gold and precious stones, is used in two different senses. In the first instance it is used to denote the proportionate purity of the metal, twenty-four carats meaning pure gold, any less number indicating so many parts pure gold, the remainder (of twenty-four parts) being alloy. When used in connection with precious stones, a carat means a weight of about three and two-tenths grains.

G. K. H.—I must say that I think some of your trouble comes from your abstinence from meat. Personally, I do not heartily approve of the vegetarian idea, because I think a small piece of juicy, tender steak or chop is really healthgiving. Try it, and see if you do not note a difference in your feelings. Simple, easily digested food is always healthy, and there is such a variety of it that the things which do not agree with the system can easily be exchanged for something else.

BRITANNIA.—Wood impregnated with creosote oil has been found to resist effectually the ravages of worms. In Germany chloride of zinc is used for this purpose, the wood being placed in boilers partly exhausted of air, and the vapour of chlorine thus driven into it. The chief objection to the use of chemicals is their cost. It is said that wood steeped in a solution of copperas becomes comparatively indestructible. A simple way of using chloride of zinc is to mix five pounds of it with every twenty-five gallons of water required, and steep the wood in the solution. In the East Indies the juice of aloes is employed as a varnish to preserve wood from worms and other insects.

MOLLIE.—I am afraid I cannot recommend anything that will remove the dye other than washing it. Black is an awkward colour to do anything with. You will find in the following lotion a simple preparation for darkening the hair: Rust of iron, 1 drachm; old ale, 1 pint; oil of rosemary, 12 drops. Cork loosely, shake frequently daily for twelve days, then after repose, decant the clear portion. The effect of this is gradual, and if you want something more in the order of a dye, try this: Pyrogallie acid, 14 ounce; distilled water (hot), 14 ounce. Dissolve, and when cool add half an ounce of rectified spirits. When using the mixture, dilute with twice its quantity of soft water and add a little rectified spirits. Apply with a soft brush.

RUTH.—Try an egg shampoo for your hair. There is nothing better. Take an egg, beat it thoroughly with an ounce of rainwater, and rub thoroughly into the scalp, with a rotary motion, beginning in front over the forehead and going back to the crown, then forward to the temples and back and forth, till the fingers of the two hands meet at the nape of the neck. After this wash the hair thoroughly in warm water, then in cold, to secure reaction. Finish the operation with a dry massage, and when every particle of moisture has evaporated, if the scalp is inclined to dryness, rub a little of the following pomade: White vaseline, 3 ounces; castor-oil, cold drawn, 14 ounce; gallic acid, 14 drachm; oil of lavender, 30 drops.

J. PEROUSE (St. Etienne).—The address I think you require is 28 to 32, Victoria Street, Westminster, London.

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